NOW
10c

Published Twice a Month

Adventure

March 15th

Distinctive Stories By

TALBOT MUNDY · JAMES STEVENS · ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON

GEORGES SURDEZ · F. R. BUCKLEY · HENRY LA COSSITT

HUGH PENDEXTER

CHECK HERE ✓

Here is a booklet for every problem. Check the ones you want today. Don't wait.

PARTIES

51..GAMES FOR GROWN UPS.....15c
To overcome dead silences.

54..FUN AND LAUGHTER PARTIES.....25c
Teen age parties for every month.

55..PARTIES FOR ALL OCCASIONS....25c
Celebrate the Gala Days throughout the year.

25..FIVE MINUTE PLAYS.....25c
Ice-breakers that get any party off to a good start.

67..TEN MINUTE PLAYS.....25c
Grand mixers. Also a double wedding for one person.

21..FIVE WAYS TO TELL FORTUNES....15c
With tea leaves, cards, letters, and smoke. Good fun!

27..WHAT'S IN YOUR NAME?.....15c
Whom should you marry, your vocation, and other hidden points about your name.

46..SECRETS OF HANDWRITING 10c
Do you long to read between the lines? Try it and see how fascinated you are.

DOGS

56..DOGS 25c
What kind of a dog have you? You'll find a chapter on all important breeds as well as care, training, registration.

MANNERS

30..GOOD TABLE MANNERS.....15c
Read this and you'll be asked to more parties. (And you won't tuck your napkin under your chin!)

SEND THE COUPON NOW!

FOOD

43..BEVERAGES FOR PARTIES...10c
How to mix a horse's neck, silver fizz, and other nice things.

63..HORS D'OEUVRES AND CANAPES 15c
These make any drink taste better. Simple enough for a man to make.

41..SALADS FOR ALL OCCASIONS 10c
A change from the inevitable tomato and lettuce. Appetizing.

47..HOW TO GIVE A BRIDGE PARTY 10c
Refreshments that take your mind off a bad hand.

26..PARTY SANDWICHES 10c
Something new for all kinds of parties. 82 recipes.

60..HOW TO ENTERTAIN 6 and 8 25c
Give this to your wife the next time the boss comes. You'll get a raise.

. . . . COUPON . . . .

DELINEATOR INSTITUTE
161 Sixth Avenue, New York

Please send me booklets checked:

51..15c	21..15c	63..15c	56..25c
54..25c	27..15c	41..10c	Rush 25c
55..25c	46..10c	47..10c	
25..25c	30..15c	26..10c	
67..25c	43..10c	60..25c	

Name .....

Address .....

City .....State .....

Adventure
(Registered U.S. Patent Office)

CONTENTS

1933
VOL. LXXXVI No 1.
for March 15th
A. A. Proctor
EDITOR

By Way Of Gratitude . . . . GEORGES SURDEZ 2
To young Lenbacher the Foreign Legion was a career in which he could go far; to his family it was merely a haven for cutthroats, tramps and renegades.

The Grapevine Telegraph . . ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON 15
The clicking wires had given the train payroll robbers their information—of that the railroad telegrapher was sure. Could they serve him as a clew as well?

A Four-Legged Hero (*An Article*) GENERAL RAFAEL DE NOGALES 24

Dynamite Straight . . . . . JAMES STEVENS 26
The little river-boss was scarcely five feet tall. The fact that he used the yellow sticks for other things than log jams accounted for a little of his reputation.

Salvage (*A Poem*) . . . . . HARRY KEMP 35

Blood Royal (*Part I*). . . . . F. R. BUCKLEY 36
Beginning a two-part story of a man who could take a gunboat shelling with greater calm than a personal slight, and who became a banana republic admiral to avenge one.

Compound Interest . . . . . HUGH PENDEXTER 54
Cat-Foot Bill was a simon-pure hellion, even for those days when men went electioneering with shotguns and opened court with a sixshooter.

Pinky Gets Red . . . . . HENRY LACOSSITT 61
When the chief "public enemy" broke from the Siberia of prisons, it was a chance for the star reporter and not for an humble cameraman.

Cinema Night (*An Article*) . . JAMES W. BENNETT 70

C. I. D. (*Part II*) . . . . . TALBOT MUNDY 72
Going on with a novel of the British Secret Service in India. A meeting with Soonya, priestess of Kali and guardian of the man-eating tigers.

The Camp-Fire 89 Ask Adventure 92 Trail Ahead 96

Cover Design by Dominic Cammerota *Headings by Neil O'Keeffe*

Published twice a month by The Butterick Publishing Company, Butterick Building, New York, N. Y., U. S. A. Joseph A. Moore, Chairman of the Board; S. R. Latshaw, President; W. C. Evans, Secretary; Fred Lewis, Treasurer; A. A. Proctor, Editor. Entered as Second Class Matter, October 1, 1910, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Chicago, Illinois. Yearly subscription, $2.25 in advance. Single copy, Ten Cents. Foreign postage, $2.00 additional. Trade Mark Registered; Copyright, 1933, by The Butterick Publishing Company in the United States and Great Britain.

By Way Of Gratitude

By

GEORGES SURDEZ

FRANZ LENBACHER had written home for the first time in seven years. He had passed the preliminary examinations for a commission in the Foreign Legion and therefore must give proof of his identity and inform his superiors of his real name, although he would be allowed to serve on under the one he had assumed. Though the Legion accepts all men without awkward questions, the French Republic must know to whom it grants command.

While waiting for an answer, he continued with his duties in the Sixth Company at Maharb, Morocco, whiling away the time by continuing his feud with Captain Corleal, an amiable, almost friendly game, not as one-sided as might appear, for the sergeant had the moral support of the entire company. Corleal had taken a dislike to his subordinate, and loved to catch him at fault. Lenbacher pacified his pride in doing as he pleased and avoiding punishment.

He was a good soldier, and his record was clean of serious charges save for a brief period at the start of his first enlistment when he had been a second class private, ill adjusted to his surroundings. Lenbacher himself spoke of those early days with a smile of tolerant understanding. He had been very young—twenty-three—and filled with spirit because he had escaped unscathed from more than four years of war.

His misbehavior in the Legion had been a lingering aftermath of his post-Armistice disappointment. Demobilization had not brought about those ideal conditions he had confidently looked forward to while tramping through France, Russia, Austria, Roumania and certain provinces of Northern Italy under the guidance of Von Mackensen. He had lived bitter days before drifting into a recruiting office in the Rhineland and signing away five years of his existence. Consequently, it was natural that he spent the second half of his enlistment bonus in such riotous living as a new Legionnaire can achieve with a few hundred francs in North Africa.

Since then he had sobered considerably, after marching in the Sahara, across the Middle Atlas, learning fortitude here, patience elsewhere. At twenty-nine he was a hardened, handsome man, tall, superbly muscled, with a shade too much independence in his bearing. His eyes were a startling violet

glint in his tanned face, and the grooves framing his mouth resembled masculine dimples when he grinned. He was particularly proud of his thick, blond hair, which he wore longer than strict regulations stipulated.

This annoyed Captain Corleal, among other things. Corleal had risen from the ranks, and recalled a day when noncommissioned men obeyed readily the slightest suggestion of a chief. Or he believed he did, which amounted to the same thing. Perhaps he was a bit envious of the elegant, slender Lenbacher; for Corleal was short, massive, slow of speech; and his swarthy face, slashed by a black mustache and topped by short-cropped bristles, could not be termed beautiful.

"Your hair is too long," he had informed Lenbacher on first meeting.

"Yes, Captain."

"Your hair is too long," Corleal repeated a month later. "You look like a barber's helper."

"Yes, Captain," Lenbacher agreed.

He was resolved not to cut his hair shorter until he received an actual order to do so, and Corleal made it a point of pride to refuse this order, striving to bring about his wish by indirect methods. In a small garrison town this feud offered more charm than might be suspected.

One hundred and eighty men watched the progress of the conflict. Sentiment was against Corleal, who was trying to revive customs long since abandoned; who was a reactionary. All knew that he had little kindness in his makeup, and it was often said that he would have hacked his old mother to pieces had regulations called for it. Nevertheless, he was not hated.

Corleal was as hard on himself as on others. He ate and drank as his men did, and when a training march grew strenuous he would dismount and march abreast of his company. Any detachment he commanded was sure that its interest and comforts would be taken care of. The captain's peculiarities in routine garrison life therefore amused rather than irritated, although he was a stalking terror, day and night, to the unwary. His orderly swore that he had his wife awaken him in the middle of the night to stroll the streets and gather stragglers. His delight, his sport, his passion, was to pounce upon an unsuspecting victim.

"Don't worry," Lenbacher told his friends, "I'll watch myself. If he gets anything on me, he'll have earned it."

ON A cool spring evening Lenbacher returned to the small room he shared with two comrades of his own rank. He was in excellent humor, and whistled cheerfully as he stripped to the waist and splashed in a bucket of water. Sergeant Murgher, an old-timer, was sprawled on a cot across the room, smoking his pipe.

"You're in on this," Lenbacher informed him, as he soaped himself copiously. "There's two girls at the Royal—dancing team. Must be pretty rotten dancers to have to play this dump, but I'm told they're Austrians and talk German. Maybe—"

"Maybe," Murgher said with intense skepticism. "There are five lieutenants in town. Ours, that of the Spahis, the—"

"Bah! Women don't look at stripes, you know."

"No? You're young," Murgher stated.

Lenbacher looked at his comrade, puzzled.

"Something's the matter with you."

"Yes. I'm worried about you."

"Corleal? You make me laugh."

"That's not it. How long since you've heard from home?"

"About seven years. Why do you ask?"

"Parents living?"

"My mother and a couple of sisters. My old man is somewhere around Verdun. He was in the reserve, you know." Lenbacher shrugged. "Funny you should ask me! I'm expecting letters. Wrote for my birth certificate a month ago." He grinned. "I'll get a scolding at the same time. Had a fierce row before I left. Wanted me in wholesale dry goods!"

"It isn't so funny, Franz. The answer came."

"Where is it?"

"There's an envelop with a mourn-

ing border." Murgher warded his friend off. "Better brace yourself. I've seen fellows get mail like this before. You think it's nothing, then you go all to bits." He reached under the table cover, brought out two envelops, one large and yellow in color, the other small, with a black border. "Here. I'd open the large one to start with."

Mechanically, Lenbacher obeyed the suggestion. Official papers dropped from the yellow envelop, and a typewritten sheet fell to the floor. The young sergeant picked it up, read it. He licked his lips, grinned nervously. His cheeks quivered as he tried to smile.

"Notary sends me birth certificate and discharge. Says I inherit nothing. My mother—" he passed one hand over his glinting hair, and his voice was shaky—"well, she must be dead. After the way I acted, I have no right to—"

"Burn that other letter," Murgher said.

"Why?"

"You've got what you asked for, your papers. You know the worst. The rest is just useless yelling and will make you feel rotten. I've seen it happen with a dozen good fellows and nothing good ever came of it. But they always had to know, had to read." He spoke harshly. "I'd sooner see a hillman in here with a knife than that thing. You're in the Legion; you intend to stick to it. Let me tell you, that's not a letter of praise!"

"I imagine not."

Murgher lighted a match.

"In that ashtray let it go."

"The hell I will," Lenbacher protested. "I'm not afraid of what they have to say. They never liked me much, save when I came on leave from the Front and they could show me off." He laughed with a hint of his natural carelessness. "Crying won't do my mother any good. What will you bet that I read this letter, see what they have to reproach me with, and go out and have a good time just as I intended to?"

"Hard man, aren't you? Have it your way."

Lenbacher sat on his cot, ripped open the envelop. He read the pages of script attentively, at first with scornful smiles, then with an occasional shrug. Then, suddenly, he flushed and cursed. Murgher sighed and unlocked his trunk. And by the time Lenbacher had changed color, turning to the corpse-like pallor that shows green under a heavy tan, he was ready with a half tumbler of brandy. The young man swallowed, coughed, grinned weakly.

"I'll save it for when I get homesick. A sure cure."

"Yes, and you've put something in your mind that'll stick there." Murgher spoke angrily. "You ought to know that people like them can't understand fellows like us. Never—because we're Legionnaires long before we enlist. Will you take advice now?"

"What?"

"Let's stay here. You kill that quart while I watch you, and sleep it off. You think you're all right. But it's like a knife wound. It'll start aching any time."

Lenbacher laughed shortly. He buttoned his tunic, adjusted his képi at a rakish angle before the four square inches of mirror nailed to the wall. Then, deliberately, he lighted a cigaret.

"You old woman, Murgher! Are you coming or aren't you?"

Murgher nodded with resignation.

"I'll stick."

LENBACHER was depressed. Coming out of the Royal, the night air struck him, seemed to clear his head, but filled him with a vague, unsatisfied expectancy. Something was about to happen, something should happen. Murgher had been right; the two dancers had joined officers at an isolated table when their dancing turn was over. The lieutenants did not speak fluent German, perhaps, but they had ordered champagne.

"No, let's walk," Lenbacher said, when Murgher turned toward the military quarters.

"'Until you pick a fight with somebody, eh? I know you too well. You've got a swelled head and a lot of illusions. You're a fair soldier, but outside of that you're dumb."

"Well, that's not so strong as what they wrote me, fellow. Seems that I am where I belong, with a lot of French

cutthroats, a renegade, a bum. If my mother died, it was because—"

"Say, I know all about that," Murgher grumbled. "Cut it out. I've been through it myself."

Lenbacher leaned against a wall, unfastened the front of his tunic, loosened his belt. His skull felt as if made of rubber, dilated by a thousand conflicting thoughts and memories.

"I didn't have more than three drinks," he said. "I'm not drunk. But I feel sick."

"What did I tell you? The reaction. We better get you to bed. Here, put your arm around my neck." Murgher explained as they walked, "You got mad and tried to hold it in. It's impossible. There was one time, with a fellow in Tadla—"

"Pretty sight!" some one said gently, behind them.

They turned and faced Captain Corleal. He stood there, swaying on heavy thighs, hands locked tightly behind his back, képi pushed to the back of his head.

"Pretty sight!" He indicated Lenbacher's open tunic with a lift of the chin. "Why bother dressing, my friend? And unless I am mistaken, Sergeant Lenbacher has been drinking. That is surprising, surprising!"

Lenbacher freed himself from Murgher's hold, readjusted his tunic.

"I'm not drunk, Captain. Just sick."

"Of course, of course!" Corleal pretended to fend him off with both hands. "Don't fall on me, my friend. And let's not talk out here. Some one might see me talking to a—sick man. Murgher, will you take him to my office? I'll come the other way. Don't care to be seen with him in that state."

The barracks were very near, and in two minutes they were in Corleal's office. Murgher switched on the light, and the two looked at each other. Both smiled, for there was nothing for which either one could be punished. Sergeants were allowed liberty until one in the morning, and it was not midnight; it was evident now that Lenbacher was not drunk. Corleal would simply vent his spite in a shower of words and sarcasms. He arrived very soon, with three Legionnaires behind him—a corporal and two privates. This trio would form his audience. They were bored in advance, and stood against the wall with dull resignation on their faces.

Corleal lighted a cigaret, paced up and down like a tiger in a cage, darting rapid, furious glances at the noncoms.

"That was a pretty sight, a pretty sight! You are presumed to go to school for a commission soon, are you not, Lenbacher? And you have been in the Legion only six years. I worked fifteen years for my sublieutenant's stripe, fifteen years! And in my day, ambitious sergeants took pride in looking like soldiers. Look at yourself." Corleal indicated the low cut shoes, the silk socks, the turned up cuffs of the long trousers. "As near a civilian as you dare to contrive with khaki. Why? Because you are a handsome man, eh? No luck tonight, eh? Lenbacher, do you hear me?"

"Perfectly well, Captain."

"I admit you don't appear drunk. For that matter, few Legionnaires drink like Legionnaires nowadays." Corleal was so wistful that the soldiers rather expected a lecture on the advisability of hard drinking. "Iced mints, cordials, liqueurs—stuff that turns the stomach! Lenbacher, suppose I reported to the colonel what I saw on the street a few moments ago? A man slated for a commission staggering, helped along by a comrade, in public!"

"There was no one to see—"

"There might have been. I saw, didn't I? No argument!" Corleal resumed his stalking, patiently waiting for inspiration. At last he stopped short. "Remove your képi, Lenbacher!" And when the sergeant had obeyed, he nodded. "That's a superb head of hair, my friend. It is too long, however."

"Yes, Captain."

"Of course, to frequent an establishment such as the Royal, to win the hearts of the pretty girls, you need long locks, tresses—a—well, a mane!"

"Yes, Captain."

Murgher looked at his friend uneasily. Just at present that was a sore topic for him. Corleal knew nothing of what had occurred; but through the years he had developed a sixth sense that warned him when he was prodding effectively. He kept speaking for several minutes,

and his sarcasm lashed his victim's pride as rawhide would have lashed his flesh.

"A handsome lad, a handsome lad you are. Quite a ladies' man! You have made a success of yourself; your mother would be proud if she could see you." Corleal perceived Lenbacher's start, and repeated over and over again, "Proud of you, proud of you! Your mother would—"

Lenbacher had stood as if rooted to the planking. His movement was so swift that no one had time to interfere. His palm struck the captain's face with a resounding smack; the officer's képi bobbed up, tumbled to the floor. An expression of utter amazement spread over his face, his fists clenched and he appeared to be about to strike back.

He accepted the képi offered him by the corporal.

"I must speak to you, Captain," Murgher said, hastily.

"In due time, in due time. Arrest Sergeant Lenbacher and take him to the prison. Dismissed."

The final scene had not lasted twenty seconds. The Legionnaires were in the darkened courtyard, and Murgher was swearing the corporal and his men to secrecy until the captain himself made the episode public.

"What do I care?" Lenbacher snarled. "I'm glad of it."

"Striking an officer—with extenuating circumstances, military degradation and eight years' hard labor! You certainly are willing to pay for your fun."

"He had it coming."

"Shut up. You've done and said enough." Murgher escorted his comrade to the prison in silence. But he said before closing the cell door, "You should have burned that letter without reading it."

ALONE, Lenbacher sank on the plank cot. His face was dripping sweat. The course of his life had been shifted by that gesture. Many men before him had spoken of striking Corleal to shut his mouth. No one would really blame him, but neither would any one serve his prison sentence for him.

Corleal was well known, and the officers gathered to judge the sergeant would understand, perhaps feel sympathy. But the military code made no exception; they would condemn him. From the moment Corleal's report was filed, the wheels would grind. And Lenbacher would get eight years in the prison camps.

Even provided he managed to behave perfectly and to avoid additional punishment, which was almost impossible, eight years of wasted life! He would be thirty-seven when freed. Even then, he would not be allowed to go very far. His present enlistment in the Legion had four years to run, and he would have to return to the Corps to serve those four years as a second class private. Eight and four made twelve, twelve and twenty-nine made forty-one. He would be middle-aged when turned loose into the world, probably broken physically by the prison camps, surely broken mentally. He was strong in mind and body, but entertained no illusions. Stronger men had succumbed to that life, had been beaten into idiocy.

Escape? He would need money, and who would supply that? His surviving relatives? They scorned him and would merely derive a definite satisfaction out of his plight. Murgher had been right. A Legionnaire should not read letters from home without long consideration.

Discharged at forty-one—gray, worn, shabby. The open road again, sleeping in ditches, picking up odd jobs, contriving to get into jail for the Winter months. The craving for drink, and the sole pleasure—relating one's experiences to bored listeners. Forty-odd and sixty in reality, for prison years in North Africa counted triple; a bum, back from the Legion and the prison camps, an object lesson to the youth of the land!

No dreams possible any longer. He would never command a section, a company. But he experienced a sense of elation that he had had the nerve to act, with those same thoughts flashing through his brain.

"The wine's drawn and must be drunk," he concluded.

The door opened after a rattling of locks. Murgher entered with the sergeant on duty, who hung a lantern on the wall and left. Lenbacher saw that his old friend appeared worn and tired,

but rather cheerful.

"I'm dead from arguing, Franz. But here's the proposition: I convinced Corleal that the men would not talk; so if you'll apologize to him before those who saw you hit him, he'll kill the report. Wait. You can't expect everything! You've got to take a few days in the jug for drunkenness. That's his official excuse for dropping the matter, that you didn't know what you were doing. He can't just take it and—"

"It was his fault. I refuse charity."

"No use arguing, I know that," Murgher declared.

He went out, taking the lantern with him. Lenbacher tried to derive consolation from foolish pride. Murgher, who knew him as well as any one could, had known that once he had spoken he would not change his mind.

DAWN was breaking when the opening of the door awoke him. He sat up, peered in the gray light, not believing his eyes. A woman stood before him, a plump, short, dark woman, a woman who was very plain save for her beautiful, tender brown eyes. He controlled his first surprise, recognized her and rose.

"Madame Corleal!"

"Sit down, Sergeant." She sank on the cot beside him. "I've come to reason with you. Oh, I know you wouldn't do anything to save yourself. I've seen foolish children before. First, I must explain about my husband. He is sincere, and thinks that all he does is good for his soldiers. He's had hard schooling. But if you think it over, it is very seldom that he punishes severely. Then it worries him for weeks."

Lenbacher threw his head back and laughed.

"Forgive, madame, but Captain Corleal with a conscience—"

"You remember when he was ill last year? Do you know what caused it? He had to testify against that young Legionnaire who deserted, and they gave him four years! He could not eat or sleep for thinking of him. Last Christmas he had me send him a package. And you know very well he'd fight against his superiors for any of his men. He is a nagger, yes, but not a bad man. He came home two hours ago, after Sergeant Murgher had explained why you were sensitive. He feels badly, but you've struck him. He is your superior; what can he do?"

"I will not apologize. I'm a man—"

"You talk like a child, Sergeant." Madame Corleal was crying softly. "He'll go through with the report, and you'll both suffer. He doesn't know I came; he would be angry. But I had to tell you this: You can straighten things in a few words. He offended you, and you struck him; that's even. Do you want to ruin his career?"

"I? How?"

"If you go to prison, the men will turn against him. I know the Legionnaires. The company will go to pieces, and that reputation will follow him. You'll hurt him, you'll hurt me. You'll hurt—everybody."

"All right, I'll apologize," Lenbacher agreed hoarsely.

He had been away from women of Madame Corleal's type too long not to be sensitive to her tears. And reason was beginning to assert itself.

"Before Sergeant Murgher, before the others who saw?"

"Before the company, before the whole regiment." Lenbacher drew away. "I want to be alone, madame."

"You poor lad," the woman said, putting one arm around his shoulders.

Unexpectedly, he was so moved that he hid his face in his hands and could not speak. The touch of her fat, flabby arm stirred something deep in him, forgotten for many years.

"Go away, go away."

"You are foolish." She drew his head against her shoulder. "You are so upset because you think your mother was angry with you, thought you a bad boy. She never wrote you that, did she?"

"No, no."

"And she always was a good mother to you, wasn't she?"

"Yes, it was the others who—"

"I know, I know! Your people write you what they think she thought. Do you think she blamed you for anything? She missed you, but she preferred to miss you rather than to have you unhappy at home. I know! Don't you think I'd sooner live quietly, on much

less, than to have Corleal risk his health and his life the way he does? A wife can sometimes follow. A mother can't. It's your life, you men. You're born with it in your soul—the uniform, the flags, the fighting. When you think your mother blamed you, just think of her, bravely, as you knew her, and you'll be consoled."

"That's so," Lenbacher said, with surprise. "They're crazy to write that sort of stuff."

"You see?" Madame Corleal bent, kissed his cheek. "Thank you, Sergeant."

Lenbacher was alone. Something had lifted from his mind. Yes, Madame Corleal had been right. Her visit had saved him from his foolishness, and relieved him of a greater burden.

"I DON'T understand it," Murgher said when the office door closed behind them the following morning. "Usually the Old Man would not have passed up such an opportunity for a speech, to rub it in a bit. Must have something on his mind."

"Maybe my hair," Lenbacher suggested lightly.

To his relief and surprise, Captain Corleal had accepted his apology with simplicity. Before the sergeant had uttered more than a few halting words, he had cut him short with a sweeping gesture.

"Accepted. Four days' confinement to quarters for disorderly conduct. You're all dismissed."

Lenbacher was annoyed. He felt that he had lost the game, for Corleal had had his chance to crush him and had spared him. For in the bright light of the morning, with the return of calm, Lenbacher knew that Captain Corleal would not have feared the resentment of the Legionnaires. Lenbacher had broken the rules, and all would have been fair enough to admit the officer's right to do as he pleased. It had been a delicate thought of Madame Corleal's. Lenbacher sighed. If one lived away from good women long enough, one quite forgot that they could be as tricky as others to gain their point.

His first thought was to obtain a transfer. But that would have resembled flight. Moreover, Lenbacher had contracted a deep debt of gratitude to the captain's wife, which he could not hope to repay, logically, but which held him at Maharb until such time as unassisted fate called him away.

Also, before long, another development perplexed him. Captain Corleal changed his ways. The alteration of his behavior was gradual, but perceptible. His lashing tongue was heard less and less, his lieutenant was left in peace, noncoms were seldom called into the office. No one ever met Corleal prowling at night. At sunset he went to the small bungalow he occupied with his wife and remained there until the bugle sounded.

"Kidding us," many Legionnaires said, "watching his chance."

They were mistaken, as an extraordinary event confirmed. Pay night came, and the captain did not return to the barracks after dinner, as was his custom, to see that the prison gathered its full quota. This was so remarkable that several of the habitual drunkards sobered when they missed him, and anxiously inquired of those on guard what had happened to the Old Man.

The captain's secretary talked over a bottle, admitted that Corleal had applied for leave. But all leaves had been stopped by order of the general staff. Unexpectedly, the company was ordered to turn over the barracks to a detachment of Native Infantrymen and proceed to Meknes. The Riff campaign had started.

From the start, it was obvious to all experienced soldiers that it would be long and bitterly waged. The struggle presented less the aspect of a colonial conflict than that of a European war. Abd-el-Krim's men resembled in dress and appearance the mountaineers of Morocco against whom the Legion had fought so often. But they were well armed, and it was immediately felt that some outside force was underneath the organization of their attack. Again the valor of soldiers was called upon to mend the errors of civilian officials.

On the morning of the attack upon the Jebel Ajjar, the Legion company under Corleal counted less than one hundred men, and a third of these were comparative recruits, replacements fresh from

Algeria. Their new equipment and uniforms contrasted with the rags of the veterans, thinned and worn by three weeks of continuous action. Lenbacher, Murgher and two other sergeants had survived. The lieutenant brought from Maharb at the beginning of the campaign had been killed, and a successor wounded. And once more the depleted sections were to form the spearhead of an onslaught.

The rising sun fused into long, blazing streaks in the pearly gray sky, and the formidable edges of the northern hills came into view as the Legionnaires reached the front lines. They were ordered off the trails to allow armored cars to roll by, away from the advanced posts. They slumped to the grass, and many were asleep before they touched the ground. Battalions of Moroccan Tirailleurs, of Senegalese Infantry, were deploying right and left.

Corleal called the section chiefs together. He was the only officer present, expected replacements having failed to arrive in time. Lenbacher thought the captain was about to drop. He had lost flesh, the skin of his cheeks hung down almost to his collar, and his eyes were perturbed. To Lenbacher and those who had known him before, his voice sounded listless.

"We've been detached from the battalion because there's a hard job to be done, and done well. They're counting on the Legion. While the Tirailleurs charge straight ahead, we strike to our right, toward the ridge over there, marked on the map as El Shareb. In case I am not there when the objective is attained, here are the instructions." He read rapidly from a typewritten sheet, then explained, "Which simply means that after reaching the ridge, we must hold it. The advance of the main column, to our right, depends on our having control up there by nine o'clock. Our task is simple. Get there and hold on." The captain's glance swept the faces before him. "Understood? Any question?"

"Captain," a new sergeant spoke up with a brisk, professional tone, "we total perhaps a hundred. Suppose there are not enough left to hold?"

Corleal shrugged wearily.

"In that case, my lad, the problem won't bother you."

He walked away.

Murgher accompanied Lenbacher to the second section.

"A FEW months back he would have snapped that guy's head off for asking such a fool question," he said. "Did you see what I saw?"

"Sure. The Old Man's pretty rattled."

"Can't blame him. This has been a nasty campaign for officers. When that new lieutenant got hit before he had been with us a full day, I could see he was worried. When he saw blood on his fingers after shaking hands with the wounded fellow, he looked like he was about to pass out. The stretcher-bearers remarked about it, too."

"Ah," Lenbacher murmured, "the men have noticed?"

"You bet, even the new ones."

"That's pretty bad."

"You said it. I have the third section, right back of him. If I have to—sort of ease him along, buck him up, you'll bear witness? Thanks." Murgher rubbed his bristling chin musingly. "What a time he picked to crack! That's a rotten job, this morning. He's not old, either. Forty or so. If he pulls through this attack, the best thing he could do would be to apply for sick leave."

"Don't think he'll break that way," Lenbacher stated loyally. "But he's sort of dazed, it looks to me. See, he walks like a somnambulist."

They turned to look at Corleal, who was walking toward the road. A staff automobile, crowded with officers in fresh uniforms, glittering with braid and medals, had come to a stop. The captain shook hands, conversed for a moment. One of the men in the car rested a hand on his shoulder in a gesture of friendship or sympathy—it was impossible to be certain—and spoke with animation. Corleal nodded, turned.

"Lenbacher! Your section is stronger than the others," he addressed the sergeant. "Detach a man to ride back on the running-board of this machine. He is to bring back what is given him by monsieur the major, picking up a lift to return before the attack starts. I'm

expecting important news."

"And I hope it's what you want, old fellow," the major said.

Lenbacher indicated a Legionnaire, then joined Murgher. He related what had happened, concluded—

"And what do you make of that?"

"Wants the news right away, before the attack?" Murgher shrugged. "Maybe he asked to be relieved."

"He wouldn't do that."

"He wouldn't?" Murgher was white. "Well, when he was facing them, the officers in the car kept straight faces, but when he was talking to you, his back turned, I could see them grin at each other from here! And what could be funnier to those gold-braided monkeys than a captain of Legion quitting before an attack?"

Lenbacher was half convinced. Corleal's behavior was not that of a man fired to enthusiasm by the prospect of danger.

"All set for eight-thirty," a runner flung at them as he passed.

The sergeants compared watches. There remained thirty-five minutes to wait. In a little over a half hour they would be climbing up the slopes ahead, under the plunging fire of the Riffi. The field batteries opened fire, and yellow smoke rolled along the crests.

Upon a signal from Corleal, the noncoms took their sections three hundred yards forward, screened them behind bushes. The sighing of bullets overhead became more frequent; for while the trenches manned by the natives were a considerable distance away, the ground between them and the French positions was alive with snipers.

"Lie down. Hold your fire," Lenbacher ordered.

He knelt, and his glance swept the khaki line formed by the company. He had a flash of doubt. Not many would remain when they reached the ridge, he feared. But there was no help for the situation at this stage, and he turned his attention to the preparations for the conflict. Patches of khaki, crested with scarlet or white, moved up behind the storming troops—the reserves, who would pour through the pass when the ridge was held by the Legion.

As always, Lenbacher's eyes sought the captain. He started, unwilling to admit the evidence. Corleal was prone, among the crouching liaison runners! He hugged the ground as they did. And that was Corleal, who had charged at Belloy! Three hundred yards to the left, near the snipers, the major of the Native Infantry flanking them was standing, field glasses high, feet apart, comfortable and confident. Not far behind, a negro lieutenant of the Senegalese regiment in support was in full sight, lighting a cigaret.

Lenbacher's hope that the Legionnaires would not notice the peculiar behavior of their chief was short lived.

"Maybe he's not insured," a corporal shouted at Lenbacher.

The sergeant reddened, made no answer. He knew that the men were disgusted. According to them the Legion should bring forward the hardest fighters, the handsomest men and the most reckless officers of any of the units in the field. Later, when the action was under way, an officer might take shelter. But so far from the enemy—it was ridiculous.

Lenbacher's irritation and shame surged into fear. The man he had detached to go to the rear had leaped from a supply truck, and was crossing the field on the run, waving a handful of papers. And Corleal had risen, trotted to meet him. If the impossible occurred, if the captain left the company at this time, there would be trouble. The desire for personal safety is the most contagious emotion under fire.

The Legionnaire handed the papers to his chief, rushed to take his place in the group. He was sweating, panting.

"Must be what he wanted. He said he'd give me fifty francs tonight. Hope we're both there to—"

A sudden clamor rose on the left; the Moroccan Regulars rose and galloped forward, bayonets flashing. Lenbacher looked at his watch. It was eight-thirty.

"Let's go!"

The Legionnaires crashed through the low bushes and ran. Lenbacher shouted with the rest, a long, inarticulate scream. Nearby he heard an impact, and No. 3, first group, spun halfway around, slid forward.

"Sergeant—"

Lenbacher heard his call, but could not stop. He howled vague encouragement over his shoulder. Then he faced forward again, progressed in long strides.

BULLETS hummed, ricocheted from the stones. On the right the Moroccan Regulars must have been struck by a flanking fire, for they swerved like straws before the wind and mingled with the Legion. There was a scene of wild confusion as their officers pushed them back, gesticulating and swearing.

It lasted but a few seconds, and the Legionnaires held their own front again. The ground ahead appeared empty, but spat lead continuously. Lenbacher felt isolated, nude, dazed. He was several yards in the lead, the target for every marksman on the slopes.

Then some one leaped ahead of him, a stocky, incredibly agile silhouette, waving a képi with a triple loop of braid. Corleal!

"Forward! Forward!"

The captain bounded up the slippery slope like a mountain goat, outstripping the fastest of his followers. He turned and shouted, and Lenbacher recognized the Corleal he had seen at work in the Middle Atlas, the Corleal who was worthy of Homeric legends. He was more spirit than flesh, and dashed forward, unafraid, invulnerable. A fiery will seemed to suck the whole company up that sandy incline.

Corleal reached the first rifle pit. He leaped into it without hesitation, his walking cane his sole weapon. Lenbacher, Murgher and the others found him beating about like a madman. There were a series of shocks, a whirl of figures, the dull thudding of butts on skulls, and the company was across the pit, still charging.

The next obstacle was a shallow trench, empty save for scattered corpses badly mangled by shells and a litter of brass cases. Corleal whistled for the halt. The first objective had been attained. The men had to take breath before carrying on to the top.

Lenbacher saw two of his men weeping, panting and sobbing as they clutched their rifles tightly and glared at their comrades. The others, more experienced, were calm, drank sparingly, and exchanged foul jokes in hoarse voices.

Corleal came down the length of the trench, his cane under one arm, dusting his képi. His face was streaming with perspiration.

"Two more hops, Sergeant. We've got five minutes here, if I remember rightly, before the artillery lengthens fire. Good Lord, it's hot. Cigaret?"

"Thanks, Captain."

"Bear right of that stone fence up there. Our supports will take care of the lads back of it. Looks like a good day, after all. But I don't like it much when it starts easily. You lost a man on the way, didn't you?"

"Right at the start, Captain."

"That's three for the company. Not bad." Corleal's mustache lifted as he grinned.

"We ran so fast they couldn't see us. Where did you collect that?"

Lenbacher lifted his hand to his cheek, brought it away smeared with blood, stared in surprise.

"Don't know, Captain. Must have been at the rifle pit. Some of them were still alive when we jumped in."

"Got anything to drink besides water?"

Lenbacher offered his canteen, filled with a mixture of anisette and water. Corleal took a long pull, rinsed his mouth with the last gulp and spat out the fluid.

"Great day for me, old fellow!"

"Yes, looks like we'll make it all right."

"I don't mean that. You know my wife, don't you?" Corleal flushed; that is, his face turned from scarlet to purple.

"Sure, Captain."

"She's all right! I have been expecting news for a week. We were moved about so much, so fast, that the mail couldn't catch up. Even telegrams failed to reach me. But I knew something had happened. I tell you, I was actually scared I'd get killed before I knew."

"Was she sick?"

"Yes and no. You see, we'd been married twelve years, and there seemed no chance. Then it happened! The staff officers in the car told me mail had arrived, and I couldn't wait. I sent the

runner."

Lenbacher grasped Corleal's hand. He began to understand.

"Everything all right?"

"You bet. A boy, three kilograms eight hundred and fifty grams!" Corleal literally giggled. He fumbled in his pockets, brought out blue telegrams, letters. "Doctor says it's a perfect baby. Had hair all over its head."

"No kidding!" Lenbacher said lamely.

"Big in the chest. Can't get leave now; couldn't leave the company even if it was granted. Soon as I can, I'll go to Meknes and see him."

"You bet."

"Happened on the fifteenth, the day poor Jeannin was hit. I was feeling rotten that day. Must have felt it." Corleal prodded Lenbacher in the ribs. "You should get married, fellow. Good for you."

Lenbacher nodded absent-mindedly. The barrage had lifted and struck along the crest. Corleal leaped out of the trench.

"Come on, Legion!"

As the men emerged into sight, the fusillade resumed. Somewhere above them the Riffi had an automatic rifle, probably a weapon captured in one of the blockhouses taken by storm the preceding week. It was badly handled, did no actual harm. But the pattering of its missiles was demoralizing. Corleal sought the danger zone, drew the groups after him.

Two or three men dropped; the rest split into small, darting clusters. Grenades were flung. The automatic and its native crew were annihilated. Corleal whistled for a halt. There remained less than a hundred yards to the crest of the ridge. This time it was Murgher who sought Lenbacher.

"What did he tell you? Know what was wrong?"

"He has a baby."

The other sergeant laughed and said no more. The company rushed again, separated into a dozen tiny columns. The natives could escape only along the cliff, and understood they would be mowed down by intensive fire as they fled. They therefore preferred to stand their ground and exact a price for their lives. Despite their courage and ferocity, the Europeans kept an advantage at close quarters. They had been well trained in the use of bayonet and grenade. And if the Legionnaires were perhaps less wiry, less nimble, they were as a rule heavier and more muscular, while the excitement of the headlong charge had brought them to a pitch of savagery that matched that of their primitive foes.

Nevertheless, the odds were against them, as they fought four to one. Bayonets flashed, rifle butts whirled and crashed to good effect; but when one of the soldiers stumbled, he vanished instantly under a pile of gray or white cloaked attackers. Wisely, Corleal had swerved clear of this mêlée, protected by the men of his liaison group. He drew his service pistol and watched the struggle, intervening with a quick shot when needed.

LENBACHER saw Murgher in danger. The sergeant had lunged, could not recover his bayonet in time to fend off two natives, who were on him like hounds worrying a wild boar, hacking and slashing. Lenbacher shoved through the mass of the struggle, pulled one of his comrade's enemies clear and fired into his stomach. But when he whirled upon the second foe, the bearded hillman was rising and Murgher sprawled motionless. Lenbacher blew the killer's brains out with another shot.

"This way, this way!"

Corleal indicated the edge of the cliff. Once that spot was reached, the company, or what was left of it, could face two ways and blast the crest clean of Riffi. But every foot of soil had to be fought for. Natives were seen leaping over the brink, vanishing. Others who fled on either side were pursued, bayoneted or dropped by cooler Legionnaires, who had knelt to aim.

This was over in fifteen seconds, and the survivors had time to breathe and to note the progress of the action elsewhere. The Moroccan Regulars were almost at their objectives. The Senegalese of the supports were at work in the maze of stone fences on the slopes. Captain Corleal took the signaling pis-

tol from the rifle-grenadier of Lenbacher's group. The captain's right arm hung limp.

"Better show them we're here," he informed the sergeant.

He pressed the trigger, and the green smoke bloomed, curled up, spread thickly. Lenbacher saw the battalions of the main column double forward, oozing swiftly across the greens and buffs of the narrow valley below them.

"Broken forearm, club blow," the captain said. "Ticket for that leave I wanted. I'm lucky today."

Corleal appeared thankful for his injury, which would give him the coveted opportunity to go back to Meknes and see his new son. Looking at him, Lenbacher understood many things.

His career had been saved by that baby; for he realized now that Madame Corleal, with a woman's pious, or perhaps superstitious instinct to help another woman's son, had come to save and console him as a gesture of gratitude to whatever power she believed in. And Corleal had felt gratitude, too, for the coming of the child so long denied them. It was all a bit foolish, but somehow touching. The Legion was the Legion, but human beings remained human beings.

"What's that?" Corleal started.

The hammering of machine guns resounded very near, yet oddly muffled. Judging by the trepidations, the weapons were underground. Then all understood and rushed to the brink of the ridge. There was a sheer drop to the ravine below, but there was a cavity twenty-five or thirty feet from the rim, reached by sliding to a small natural platform. In that hollow of the rocky wall the Riffi had concealed machine guns and, sheltered from those above by many feet of stones and dirt, could mow down the advancing soldiers in absolute safety. The slope bulged outward above the hole, so it was impossible to throw grenades into the cave from above.

"That's where those who leaped off went to," Lenbacher said. "There must be twenty or thirty slobs in there."

"Get ropes, straps, anything," Corleal said. "We'll swing a few grenadiers over and clean them out." As the order was being carried out, the captain turned to Lenbacher. "That'll take a few minutes. Meanwhile, we must interfere with that fire as much as we can. Get me a sack of grenades and I'll leap down to that platform—"

"That's a crazy idea, Captain."

"But the best we have." Corleal smiled his rigid smile. "Our job was not only to take the ridge, but to halt all fire from up here. It's risking one life to save fifty. Those machine guns will become effective when our fellows are a hundred yards nearer."

Lenbacher paled, looking down at the platform. Corleal was no longer athletic and, with one arm useless, would have small chance. But the captain was a Legion officer, and such men taught by example. No argument could shake his decision. The greatest risk belonged by right to the ranking survivor able to act.

Rapidly the sergeant thought of what had been done for him. Corleal had something to live for, did not have the right to die until he had seen his son. And this was the opportunity Lenbacher had despaired of. If he sent this man back to his wife alive, he would have cleaned the slate.

He had risked his career for his pride. He could risk life for those who had befriended him. Almost surely he would be killed. But Murgher had died; so had many others. This was as good a day as any that might come in the future. And Lenbacher became a second offender.

His hand clenched and his massive fist shot out, straight for his chief's jaw. This time it was not a slap of resentment, but a solid, well aimed punch, loosed by a man accustomed to using his fists to settle long arguments.

Corleal's head snapped back, bobbed forward. His knees sagged and his body collapsed. He stretched face down, motionless. Lenbacher turned to the gaping Legionnaires.

"Keep him up here, whatever happens, you get that?" He slipped his head inside the straps of the grenade pouch offered him. He grasped one of the small shells in each hand, primed and ready. "I'm going down there. When I'm done, another man follows. As soon as the ropes are ready, go after

them as you like. When he wakes up, tell him—well, never mind."

Lenbacher leaped from the crest, landed on the almost vertical incline on the seat of his trousers, slid down in a small avalanche of sand and gravel. He feared that he would not keep his balance when his heel struck the platform, that he would bounce farther, out and down, to strike the boulder strewn floor of the ravine two hundred feet below. But as that was his ultimate destination in any case, he simply prayed that he would come to a stop long enough to use his weapons.

His feet struck with a hard impact, his knees yielded, and he squatted for an instant. This saved him. For the natives, warned of his arrival by the rattling of pebbles and dirt, fired as he dropped, shoulder high, and the bullets struck over his head. Sinking to his knees, he flung both grenades. The men huddled in the cave lowered their weapons, fired again. Half-blinded, stunned, the sergeant's hand groped into the bag, his fingers mechanically making the required motions. And he tossed in a third grenade, a fourth.

He could hear the explosions, mixed with a confused, surging roar, like that of enormous rollers crashing on a rocky coast. A red veil was thrown before his eyes, then he was looking at the immense sky, at the immense sun that had burst, that spattered and spread over the universe in a blood-red flood.

WEEKS later Lenbacher was informed that he had been rescued after the combat as he hung from bushes suspended by the straps of the grenade pouch. His skull had been torn by fragments of grenades; three bullets had perforated his chest. But as he had survived the concussion, the loss of blood, had lived to reach Meknes and a clean hospital, the doctors assured him that he would recover perfectly.

A staff officer visited him, said that the exploit would not only merit a citation, but that Lenbacher would receive a temporary commission as sublieutenant for the duration of the campaign. After hostilities were over, there would be time enough to send him to school, where he could prove in black and white that he was worthy of leading men in combat.

Captain Corleal came to visit him, his right arm still in a sling. They talked of the military situation, of the company, which had been broken up to reenforce other units. Corleal had an envelop filled with snapshots of his child. And this introduced the subject they had avoided for awhile. With a grin Lenbacher said—

"You didn't make a report, Captain."

"No. I guessed your intention well enough." Corleal laughed. "I prayed for something to happen, and it did happen. Do you imagine I liked to go down there? But I had to. I couldn't have done what you did, though. Too old, too stiff, too slow. And then I had no witnesses. Couldn't find a Legionnaire to tell me what had happened until I had cited you and could not go back on my signed statement. No thanks due between us, eh? We're holding up the baptism until you are allowed to go out."

The surgeon and the nurse arrived to change the dressings. Corleal stood aside, watched.

"I don't blame you for wearing your hair long," he said when they were alone again. "When it's shaved off, you're about the ugliest mug I've ever seen."

By ALLAN VAUGHAN ELSTON

THE GRAPEVINE *Telegraph*

ERNIE SMITH, night operator at Dry Creek, yawned, then tossed aside his dog-eared magazine. His was a lonesome job. The population of Dry Creek comprised one solitary human being, and that person was Smith himself. White Wolf, the next station east, had a day operator; so did Blister, the next depot west. But Dry Creek was only a night station. Smith slept most of the day in the operator's bunkroom.

At 7:30 P.M. he had been on duty half an hour.

DC was his call. Dots and dashes suddenly began to pound on his receiver, and Smith answered. It was the dispatcher, demanding peevishly—for the tappings of a telegrapher no less than a human voice may display tone and temper—why DC hadn't reported on Extra 1221.

"She just came in sight," Smith snapped back at him.

Through the leftmost pane of his bay window he saw the approaching headlight. The board was up for it, and the freight rattled by. Ernie promptly reported its passage.

A minute later WF, which was White Wolf, paid him a social call. That is, the White Wolf operator, having an idle moment and a clear wire, called DC and suggested a friendly wager on the coming Jawn Meegan-Shocko fight for the heavyweight championship of the world. Smith took the Jawn Meegan end of a five-dollar bet. He listened in while WF offered BL, the Blister night man, a similar opportunity. Smith, as long as his telegraphic switch was cut in, could hear all talk on the division wire. In his time he had worked on many other lonely night tricks in the West, and he knew that office to office gossip on an idle wire is rarely rebuked by the dispatchers. It does no harm, and helps to keep isolated night men contented.

Ernie Smith was about to resume reading his magazine when he heard a flivver drive up in the rear of the depot. Its driver came in, and proved to be Slim Madigan of the Esperanza mine. It was this sizable mine which gave the

Dry Creek station its only importance, for a freight spur branched off here and followed up Dry Creek valley thirty-five miles to the mine.

"What's new, Slim?" greeted Ernie Smith.

"Same old life, Ernie. How's No. 6?"

"She ought to be on time, but I've no report yet. Make yourself at home."

Slim Madigan was lanky, six feet tall, with a bluish red complexion. He bore a striking resemblance to a turkey gobbler and was a contrast to Ernie Smith —short, with round, pallid features. The two were warm friends.

Madigan sat down beside Smith and propped his boots upon the counter. Being the official payroll guard of the Esperanza mine, he was conspicuously armed with a .45 pistol. At this moment he was in a mood of relaxation. He was not guarding a payroll, but merely waiting for one.

At least Smith presumed that he was, because he had heard a wire go through to Esperanza a few hours before, requesting Guard Madigan to meet No. 6 tonight. The railroad maintained a branch telegraph line with an operator at the Esperanza, because many messages and shipments came from the mine.

Ernie Smith also happened to know that the Esperanza, though a sound property, had recently found itself short of ready cash. Two months' pay was due. The day before the superintendent, Grant Marling, had gone to Custer in an effort to raise the necessary cash. He was returning on No. 6. Presumably he had succeeded in his mission, for if he were coming without the cash he would hardly have wired for the escort of an armed guard.

AGAIN the dispatcher called DC. He wanted to know whether the C-in-a-C ranch had loaded four cattle cars. Ernie Smith said no, but that they'd be loaded tomorrow for sure. Then he signed off and for the next ten minutes swapped range gossip with Slim Madigan.

They were interrupted by a sharp command from the door leading into the waiting room—

"H'ist 'em!"

Whirling around, Smith and Madigan saw the barrels of two rifles. Back of each was a masked face.

One of the rifles was poked through the grating of the ticket window and aimed at Smith. The other, from the waiting room doorway, covered Madigan. The drop was too perfect. Ernie knew that resistance would be suicide, so he grinned and raised his hands.

"Help yourself," he invited. "There ain't a dime in the house."

Madigan, though his face flushed even redder than a tom turkey's, took the cue. Elevating his arms, he drawled:

"Yep, you're in the wrong pew, brothers. They don't even sell tickets at this here station any more."

The man in the doorway cocked his rifle and barked—

"Stand up and face the wall."

Smith saw by the tension of Madigan's muscles that he was itching for a chance at gunplay, but there was no opening. Smith knew that these crooks were not after any chance small change at a prairie depot. The game they were stalking, beyond doubt, was Grant Marling, who was shortly due to descend from No. 6 with two months' pay for the Esperanza mine.

Smith's own pistol was in a drawer well beyond his reach. With two rifles against Madigan's holstered .45, the operator and the payroll guard obediently turned their faces to the wall. The two outlaws entered. One of them disarmed Madigan.

Then there was a thud as a rifle butt crashed down brutally upon Madigan's head. He collapsed to the floor. A similar fate followed for Ernie Smith. A blow on the head, and he sprawled over the form of the prostrate guard.

His head roared. For some minutes he was only half conscious. He knew, though, that he was being dragged by his feet. He was pulled out to the board platform between the depot and the track, then down the platform a few paces to the open door of the baggage room.

In a similar manner Madigan was brought along by the other outlaw. Both victims were heaved into the baggage room, tied hand and foot, then

gagged.

No sound came from Madigan. He did not even kick. Whether the man was dead or merely unconscious Smith could not guess. He himself had just recovered sufficiently to hear the baggage room door slide shut, its heavy padlock snap in the hasp.

Operator and guard were trussed, gagged and locked in complete darkness.

Gradually Ernie's head cleared. He wriggled and twisted, but he could not break the ties at his wrists and ankles. Neither could he spit out the gag which almost choked him, and which he realized would prevent the trainmen of No. 6 from hearing distress calls in the baggage room. He knew No. 6 would stop for only a few seconds—just long enough for the passenger, Grant Marling, to alight on the station platform. It would be well on its way before Marling could walk around the depot and discover that Guard Madigan was not waiting in the flivver.

Then, of course, the outlaws would rush Marling and seize the payroll.

Lying miserably on the baggage room floor, Ernie tried to summon some ruse. He could see nothing and his voice was muzzled; but he could hear. To him now came the familiar sounds of his night trick. He could hear the buzzing of a rheostat and the clicking of the telegraphic receiver, for there was only a thin partition between baggage room and office. Thus he heard the division dispatcher give Jonesburg, five stations down the line, an order for Extra 1221.

Awhile later he heard the sociable WF pay a call on KN, asking KN whether he were going to the C-in-a-C barbecue day after tomorrow.

Then Ernie Smith heard the outlaws talking. They were in his own office, no doubt seated in the chairs recently occupied by himself and his guest, the guard.

"You gonna leave this glim burnin'?"

"Sure. If the light was off it would look phony to the train crew, wouldn't it? With the light on they'll figger the operator's on duty, and maybe just gone out to the coal shed fer a hod o' coal."

A minute of silence. Then came more telegraphic buzzings. Eventually Ernie heard a voice say—

"I don't see how the hell you can set there readin' like that."

"Dry up, will you?" came the answer.

Ernie gathered that the bolder bandit had picked up the dog-eared magazine and was reading it to kill time while waiting for No. 6. To Ernie it proved two things: that the man was an exceptionally cool customer, and that he was not illiterate.

"We better be fadin' out in back," suggested the lesser crook nervously. "She'll be here in ten minutes."

"She won't be here for twenty-seven minutes," retorted the bolder man. "Dry up, will you?"

FOR the next twenty minutes there was no sound except the buzz and click of the telegraph. Each group of clicks was plain speech to Ernie Smith. He listened in an agony of tension, hoping to hear the dispatcher call DC. When DC failed to answer, the dispatcher might suspect something was wrong and warn the conductor of No. 6 by getting a message to him at Blister.

That, considered Smith, was the one hope. The hope faded as the minutes passed and the call of DC did not click in the other room. Finally Ernie felt certain that No. 6 must have passed Blister. A moment later he heard BL report its passage. Short of Dry Creek, the train was now entirely out of the dispatcher's control.

"There's her headlight now," one of the outlaws said. "Let's fade."

Smith heard footsteps as the outlaws went out to take ambush at the rear of the depot. Then he heard No. 6 whistle for Dry Creek. The board was up, of course. But since the train had a passenger for Dry Creek it would stop.

Ernie heard it pull in and brake to a stop, the engine five cars ahead of the depot, the observation platform the same distance short of the depot. The train halted barely five seconds, during which the hissing of a steam line and the puffing of the engine might well have drowned any outcry from the baggage room, even had Ernie been able to spit out his gag.

The train moved on.

"Hey, Ernie," a voice called from the platform, "did Slim show up?"

It was the voice of the genial superintendent of the Esperanza, Grant Marling.

Smith, lying helpless in the locked baggage room, could easily picture Marling as he stood on the outer platform. Observing that the lighted operator's room was empty, he would not be particularly surprised or alarmed. He would presume that the operator was on duty, and had merely stepped out of his office on any of a dozen possible errands.

A moment later Ernie heard Marling stroll around to the rear of the depot. In a sweat of suspense Ernie awaited the sound of the inevitable assault.

It came, heralded by a shriek of terror from Grant Marling. After that, silence.

Ernie expected to hear the starting of an automobile motor. No such sound came, so he divined that the crooks were not using Madigan's flivver as a vehicle of escape. Possibly they were riding horses. Or maybe they had a car of their own parked at a distance from the station.

He rolled over in the dark. Groping with his bound hands, he touched Madigan. The guard stirred but could not speak.

In the office the telegraph instrument was clicking away. Suddenly it began to call DC. The call was normally nonchalant for awhile and then, evoking no response, became petulantly insistent.

DC DC DC DC Wake up DC DC DC.

To Smith it was as plain as a human voice, and he could sense the dispatcher's growing irritation. Inevitably he heard the dispatcher call BL, the next station.

BL answered promptly.

"DC seems to be either asleep or drunk," snapped the dispatcher. "Try to get him yourself. If you can't, tell Extra 1346 to stop there and have a look."

For the next ten minutes BL and the division dispatcher's office, in turn, called DC. Neither had any luck. By that time Ernie Smith had managed to spit the gag out of his mouth. He shouted hoarsely. No one heard him. There was not even a section crew at Dry Creek. The fact that Grant Marling did not answer suggested that the mine superintendent had either been abducted or killed by the outlaws.

Finally a freight train rumbled in, the caboose stopping at the depot. Smith shouted and a brakeman answered.

Ernie told him where he could find a key for the baggage room padlock. Two minutes later the door was opened by the crew of the freight.

Back of the depot Grant Marling was found, his money satchel gone and his skull crushed.

AT NOON the next day Ernie Smith was sitting morosely in the Dry Creek depot with Slim Madigan and two other men. Smith and Madigan each had a lump on the top of his head. Their companions were a deputy sheriff and a relief operator sent for duty at DC.

The county sheriff and a large posse were out scouring the range for the outlaws who had murdered Grant Marling and made away with twenty-six thousand dollars.

"It's a bet they ain't no big town gunmen," the deputy was remarking. "If they was, they'd 'a' come in a car. Or they'd 'a' made off in Slim's car, which same was right there handy."

"You found horse tracks?" inquired Jarboe, the relief operator.

"Sure we did, and lost 'em on a malpais bald."

"That means," opined Slim Madigan, rubbing his bruised head, "that they aim to hide out where a car can't travel. High up somewheres in the mountains."

"Yeah, it's a cinch they got a hole-up in some gulch, where they'll never be found," agreed Ernie Smith disconsolately. "Well, I hope that guy enjoys readin' the magazine he swiped from this office."

"Took a magazine, did he?" echoed Jarboe.

"Yeah; and he sure was a cool customer. Durin' the twenty-odd minutes they waited for the train, he set here readin' a mag I'd left on the counter. Must have been interested, 'cause he bawled the other bird out for interruptin' him. Then hanged if he didn't stuff the magazine in his pocket and take it with him."

"How do you know he did?" asked the deputy, eyeing Ernie with a peculiar narrowing of his lids.

"It's gone, ain't it? If the crooks didn't take it, who did?"

Slim arose and stretched.

"Going back to the Esperanza?" Ernie asked.

"Not me," Slim answered. "I'm going over to the C-in-a-C to borrow a couple of mounts. Then I'm organizin' a one-man posse. I aim to ride every inch of Oregon till I find the buzzards what cost me my job."

Madigan, to whose lack of alertness the Esperanza charged the death of Marling and the loss of twenty-six thousand dollars, had been notified that his services as official guard would no longer be required. He now left the depot, and Ernie heard him drive away toward the C-in-a-C ranch.

Jarboe went back to the bunkroom for some sleep, his trick not beginning until evening. The deputy also departed. Ernie Smith remained alone in the depot office. He set his mind to work on the job of solving the crime.

"What's needed," he said to himself, "is less hard riding and more hard thinking. Those guys are holed up safely in the hills. So instead of looking for hoof-prints on the range, I'm going to look for clews right here in this office."

He searched for clews. The sheriff had already done so, without success.

But Ernie Smith, carefully scrutinizing everything on the instrument counter, found what he conceived to be a clew.

On the back of a way-bill form he found some figures, scribbled in pencil, which he had not written himself. These figures were in two columns, one a column of addition and the other of subtraction. The arithmetic was so elementary that Ernie wondered why the calculator had not performed it mentally.

"I reckon he never went to school very much," he thought.

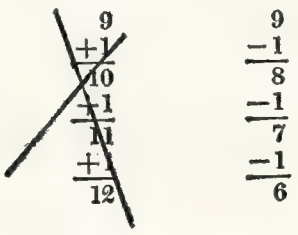
Another odd thing was that the left hand column, after being added, had been crossed out as if the adding were wrong. But to Ernie it seemed entirely correct. So was the right hand operation of subtraction, which was not crossed out.

Ernie went into the bunkroom and awakened Jarboe. He displayed the scribbled figures.

"Did you write this, Jarboe?"

"Not me," Jarboe said. "But I noticed it on the counter when I got here. I supposed it was something you did yourself."

Ernie Smith went back into the wire room and puzzled over the figures. The columns were these:



They completely baffled Smith. Yet he was fully convinced that the figures had been scribbled by one of the outlaws during the half-hour wait for No. 6.

All that afternoon, and for most of the night, Ernie Smith tried unsuccessfully to attach a significance to those two columns of figures.

Next morning the sheriff came by; he reported no luck.

"I still got men out," he told Ernie gloomily. "When we lost their tracks, those fellows were headin' toward the Strawberry Buttes. Maybe we'll pick 'em up. Most likely we won't."

The sheriff caught No. 5 for the county seat.

A day later other possemen came by, reporting a blind haul in the Strawberry Buttes.

"It looks like a clean getaway," one deputy said. "Most likely they made them tracks toward the buttes to fool us, then doubled off toward any one of a dozen other ranges."

The next day Ernie Smith was still puzzling over his clew of the scribbled figures. It continued to baffle him, and finally he gave it up.

He sought a new lead. Finally his eye came to rest upon the office clock. The clock was right. It was always right. The outlaws, therefore, would have known the correct time every minute during the period they waited for

No. 6. They would also have posted themselves as to the exact time No. 6 was due.

He recalled that one outlaw had said—

"She'll be here in ten minutes."

And the other man had retorted—

"No, we got twenty-seven minutes."

An idea flashed to Ernie. His hand shot out to the transmitter and called the division dispatcher.

"Exactly how late," he asked the dispatcher, "was No. 6 running the night of the holdup?"

"Seventeen minutes," he was told.

Ernie sat back and relapsed into profound meditation. It was clear to him that one of the outlaws had known that the train was running seventeen minutes late. How had he known? The lateness of the train had not been posted on the depot blackboard. In fact, Ernie himself, at the time of being held up, had not heard whether or not the train was on time.

Yet later one of the outlaws had found out about it. Ernie reasoned that there was only one way in which he could have learned—a knowledge of the Morse telegraphic code. Perhaps he had heard some operator down the line report on the passage of No. 6.

Then another point flashed to Smith. It supported the first, but neither idea seemed to have any connection with the scrawled columns of figures.

JUST then Slim Madigan came in. He had been riding hard and far, and was weary.

"It ain't any use," Slim said bitterly. "They's just too many hills an' hollers in the State of Oregon."

"Cheer up; I got a new hunch," said Ernie. "Listen, Slim, you and I, we're the goats on this play. We got batted down and locked in the baggage room, and you lost your job. Worse, I've even heard a whisper that maybe we laid down a-purpose and let ourselves be tied up for a split of the loot."

"What?" exploded Slim wrathfully. "Show me the guy what said—"

"No one said it," cut in Ernie. "I just caught a hint of that slant from some operator's gossip I heard over the wire. No one was on duty in this office, so I wasn't supposed to hear. BL asked WF, 'Aren't Madigan and Smith pretty close to each other?' 'Yeah, they've always been as thick as thieves,' said WF. Stuff like that. In a way, you can't blame 'em. No use gettin' sore about it. 'Stead of that, let's get busy and run down the crooks. You throw in with me, Slim. We'll work on a hunch of mine and keep it under our hats."

"What hunch?"

"Did you ever hear of a racket called wire tapping?" countered Ernie.

"It's a racetrack racket, ain't it?"

"Usually. But there's no reason why it couldn't be worked on a branch telegraph line to a gold mine. There's a railroad wire from here to Esperanza, cut in on this division circuit. There's a regular railroad operator at Esperanza. The distance is thirty-five miles. Suppose a couple of wire tapping crooks wanted to listen in on the details of some bullion shipment from the mine! They could cut in somewhere on that thirty-five miles and set up a telegraphic receiving outfit in the brush.

"My hunch is that these fellows did that. But they got no news about a bullion shipment because Marling always used code for that kind of a message. At the same time, these fellows heard about Marling going to Custer to raise two months' payroll in cash. From Custer, Marling wired the mine for you to meet him here on the arrival of No. 6. These fellows knew you were the official payroll guard; so they doped out, correctly, that Marling was coming with the cash. Then they loped down here and stuck us up."

Slim Madigan was dubious.

"It sounds like a brainstorm," he objected.

"It might," agreed Ernie, "except for the fact that I know one of these fellows can read Morse."

When Ernie explained why he knew Slim became alert.

"It's backed up," he conceded, "by the fact that them guys knowed exactly what train Marling was comin' on. Which same nobody at the mine knew until the wire come through. And the wire wasn't showed to nobody but me. I had barely enough time to drive the thirty-five miles in the flivver. But where does it get us?"

"If we ride every inch of the telegraph line to Esperanza," explained Ernie, "we can locate the tap."

"But they won't be there now," objected Slim. "Once they got their mitts on the money, they sure headed for someplace else."

"It won't hurt us, though," argued Ernie, "to have a look at a place where they once were. We might find some kind of a tip-off. Got an extra horse?"

Slim had a remount. And one of the C-in-a-C boys, off to market with four cars of cattle, had stored his saddle, blanket and bridle at the depot. Ernie borrowed this outfit and was soon equipped for a ride with Madigan.

They rode up Dry Creek Valley following the line of slim, short telegraph poles which led to the Esperanza. At each pole Ernie looked up at the crossarm for evidence of a tap.

"It won't be too close to Dry Creek station," he predicted. "It ought to be in some real brushy place about halfway between the main line and the mine."

They kept on for three hours, inspecting every pole.

Nineteen miles up the valley, which narrowed and became more overgrown the nearer it got to Blister Mountain, they found the tap.

Insulated wires led down a pole to the ground, entering a bent pipe an inch in diameter. The pipe was buried shallowly for a distance of thirty feet, reappearing in a thicket.

"Cock your gun," cautioned Slim, "although they ain't one chance in a thousand them fellows'll be here now."

In the thicket the wires led from the pipe and were strung along saplings toward a perpendicular rock wall fringing the valley. The wires led directly to a woodbine vine which densely screened a portion of the rock wall.

Ernie and Slim, guns ready, approached cautiously.

Pushing an edge of the vine screen aside, they came upon a snug cave about ten feet deep in the rock wall. In the cave was a cracker box, and on the box was a complete telegraphic receiving set. The outlaws were gone.

"They've left these diggings fer good," said Slim. "This here plant's done its work, and so they ain't got any more use for it."

It seemed so to Ernie Smith. He examined the telegraphic receiving set and saw that its switch was cut out. He cut it in. Immediately the instrument began to click off dots and dashes.

Ernie heard his own dispatcher call WF on the main line.

"The line to Esperanza," Ernie explained to Slim, "is on a circuit with all stations on the Dry Creek division. That means I could sit right here and hear any message sent over the circuit."

"Switch it off," Slim suggested. "Let's leave everything just as we found it."

Smith cut the instrument out. He then searched the cave for any clew which might indicate the identity of the former occupants. He found nothing.

"We found the right barn, but the horse has already been stole out of it," remarked Slim, annoyed.

Effacing every evidence of their own visit, they left the cave and hid in the thicket for two hours, on the bare chance that the outlaws might return.

The ambush was fruitless. At dusk Ernie and Slim rode back to the Dry Creek depot, morose and discouraged.

"Let's keep this wire tapping angle under our hat," Ernie insisted. "At least until I dope out what these figures mean."

He showed Slim the two columns of figures, one of addition and the other of subtraction. The figures were as meaningless to Madigan as they were to Smith.

THEY found Relief Operator Jarboe on duty. Leaving him at work, they repaired to the bunkroom to sleep. Ernie Smith lay awake most of the night, tossing and fretful, trying to perceive some connection between the puzzle of figures and the wire tappers' cave. He failed utterly.

In the morning they had breakfast with Jarboe. Then Jarboe went to bed. Slim, after feeding and watering the horses, returned to the depot. He found Ernie lying on the baggage room platform staring studiously at the sky.

"I'm not going to move," Ernie vowed to Slim, "until I dope out why a guy would add one three times to nine, and

then reverse the operation. It beats me. Yet that bird must 'a' had some reason for doin' it."

Slim rolled a cigaret. He took the paper from Ernie and spent a half hour squinting at it.

"It sure is a Chinee puzzle," he complained. "Nine plus one plus one plus one equals twelve! Well, when I went to school that was the right answer, yet he crossed it out. Then he says nine minus one minus one minus one equals six! Well, maybe he was just watchin' the clock, keepin' track of the minutes until train time."

That implausible solution did not appeal to Ernie. He continued to lie on his back, his eyes squinting as the sun shone full in his face. He kept that pose until the sun was directly overhead.

"Well," drawled Slim, "I reckon it's noon by every good clock in Oregon. So let's eat."

Ernie Smith sat bolt upright. A flash of inspiration came to his face. The phrasing used by Slim had lighted a candle of thought in his brain.

"I got a hunch, Slim, that you just said something. You say it's noon in Oregon. Which impels me to reflect that it's midnight in the Garden of Eden, or thereabouts. Let's eat, then let's ride. I've just shipped another brainstorm."

He declined to confide his hunch further.

They partook of a quick lunch without awakening Jarboe.

"This is the fifteenth of the month, ain't it?" Ernie asked.

Slim thought it was. Ernie sought a calendar and made certain.

"Let's get goin'," he urged.

Slim saddled the two horses and soon they were off. After a nineteen-mile ride up the valley, they reached the neighborhood of the wire tappers' cave at four in the afternoon.

Well away from it, they concealed their horses in a thicket. Then they went afoot to the woodbine-screened cave and peered in. The place was just as they had left it.

"Pick a good brushpile, Slim," Ernie said. "If my hunch is any good, those crooks'll show up along about sundown."

Slim chose a live windfall in a nearby tangle of vines. There the two men crouched in ambush.

"Why the heck," inquired Slim puzzledly, "would they be showin' up at sundown?"

"Maybe they won't," Ernie admitted nervously. "Maybe my hunch is all wrong, but it's worth trying."

He declined to say more.

They waited. An hour dragged by. Then another. When the sun dipped behind Blister Mountain, Ernie looked at his watch. It was 5:56 P.M.

Six o'clock came and passed. When nothing happened, Ernie began to doubt his theory. It was, he admitted, more hunch than logic. Was it all wrong?

By 6:30 it was quite dark. Ernie began to lose hope. At 7:00 his quarry had still failed to appear. Ernie conceded that his theory was a total wreck.

He held out until 8:30; then he explained disappointedly to Slim Madigan:

"It was a good hunch while it lasted, Slim, but it didn't pan out. You see, while those crooks were sittin' in the depot waitin' for No. 6, one of them read a magazine I'd left on the counter. Later he took it with him. It happened to be the latest issue of *Ringside*, a fight fans' weekly, so it looks like this bird was plenty interested in fights.

"All right," pursued Ernie. "While he was readin' it in the depot, WF was baiting the KN operator on the wire for a bet on the coming battle of the century, between Shocko and Jawn Meegan. From where I lay on the baggage room floor I heard KN ask when it was coming off. WF said it was to be at 9:00 P.M. on the fifteenth at Madison Square Garden.

"About that time one of the crooks picked up a pencil and did some figuring. When it's 9:00 o'clock in New York, what time is it in Oregon? Funny thing, Slim, the first time any one figures that problem he always figures it wrong. He adds, because the sun moves from New York to Oregon. Our crook finally subtracted, finding out that it would be 6:00 P.M. in Oregon."

"Well?" challenged Slim.

"He wouldn't have done all that figurin'," argued Ernie, "except for a purpose. The only possible purpose I could think of was that, being a fight fan, he wanted

a ringside seat at the fight. He could sneak down here from his mountain hideout, at 6:00 P.M. of the fifteenth, and listen in on the wire. He'd get no blow-by-blow report, but he'd hear the result quick enough. Come, I'll show you."

Ernie led Slim to the screen of woodbine. They pushed it aside and entered the cave. After lighting a candle Ernie switched in the telegraph instrument. It began to click dots and dashes. For ten minutes there came only a string of routine railroad messages. Then Ernie translated a bit of unofficial conversation.

"That last," he explained, "was WF collecting his bets. He was telling KN that Shocko just won by a knockout in the fifth round."

Slim scowled.

"Well," he said, "the crooks didn't show up to find out about it, so here we are, holding the bag!"

Ernie Smith cut out the telegraph and extinguished the candle. Then, with Slim, he waited in the dark cave for three hours. The outlaws did not arrive.

"I was a fathead for thinking they would," Ernie conceded at midnight. "Let's go home."

They left the cave and made their way to the horses.

"Tell you what," Slim suggested, "let's bed down right here till daylight, then ride over to the C-in-a-C for breakfast. We can take a fresh start from there."

Ernie agreed. Each man took a blanket roll from his saddle and lay down.

IT SEEMED to Ernie Smith that he had barely fallen asleep when Slim wakened him. But when he sat up he saw that dawn was breaking.

"Be quiet," Slim warned cautiously. "I heard a coupla broncs in the brush, upcreek. Sounded like somebody ridin' toward that wire tappers' cave."

Ernie sprang up, alert and eager. Without a word he drew his gun and followed Slim Madigan.

Noiselessly and afoot they moved a quarter-mile up the valley toward the thicket which screened the cave.

Peering through the brush, they saw two saddled horses. The mounts seemed to have been ridden hard and far, and were standing in front of the woodbine which sheltered the cave.

Click! Click! Clickety-click-click! The telegraph receiving set was in action beyond the vines.

Slim moved forward, calm and assured. Ernie followed, and as he did so he looked at his watch. It was 6:00 A.M.

Was there virtue in his theory, after all, Ernie wondered?

"I had the right hour but the wrong day," he whispered to Slim.

They crept forward. Outside the vine shelter they waited for a moment, listening. Ernie heard the telegraph continue to thump dots and dashes. He read every word of an inconsequential message from the division dispatcher to KN.

Suddenly a gruff voice spoke within the cave. It said:

"My hunch is that he was bluffing. Dammit, Joe, I don't believe he'd squeal."

"He swore he would," another voice answered. "He swore he'd squeal with his last breath if we didn't put up dough to spring him."

"Well, we'll soon know," ventured the other man. "'Cause if he squealed there'll be a flock of wires to the sheriff of this county."

"Wires about what?" demanded Slim Madigan.

He squeezed past the vine and entered the cave; the butt of his leveled gun was braced against his ribs.

Ernie Smith quickly stepped within and stood at his side.

They faced two hard-bitten men, one short and one tall, one heavily bearded, the other with an angular, clean shaven face. On the cracker box between them the telegraphic receiver continued to click.

The suddenness of the intrusion seemed, for a moment, to petrify the outlaws.

Then the taller man shrugged and slowly began raising his hands. But the shorter man took a chance. His right hand flashed to his holster. He fired a tenth second after Slim Madigan tripped his own trigger.

The short man pitched forward. At the same instant his companion made a dive to get past Ernie Smith.

Ernie struck his head with the barrel of his gun. As the man went down he drew his gun, whirling viciously, but before he could fire Ernie hit him again. This time the man crumpled with a groan. Ernie stooped and snatched his weapon, then took a deep breath of relief as he realized that the fight was finished.

"Watch 'em," Slim directed, "while I take a look at their broncs."

Slim left the cave.

The short man lay motionless, with a pink stain beginning to discolor the breast of his shirt. The other man rolled over and glared at Ernie; seeing him doubly armed and alert, he made no move to rise.

As Ernie stood guard he was subconsciously translating the clicks of the telegraph. Gradually he became aware that a message was being relayed, via the railroad wire, from the county seat to Blister and that it concerned the two men who had killed Grant Marling and who now lay vanquished before him.

The full message read:

TRENTON NEW JERSEY 16TH 9:22 AM
SHERIFF
GRANT COUNTY OREGON

Z H FOSTER MADE COMPLETE STATEMENT JUST BEFORE HIS EXECUTION HERE AT NINE O'CLOCK THIS MORNING FOR BANK ROBBERY AND MURDER IN NEWARK LAST MARCH STOP IN STATEMENT FOSTER IMPLICATED TWO MEN NOW AT LARGE WHO ENTERED BANK WITH HIM NAMED MINK TROTTER EX-TELEGRAPH OPERATOR AND DENVER JOE JOSS STOP SAID THEY ARE NOW IN YOUR COUNTY STOP DETAILS FOLLOW —G Y GURD
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

A minute later Slim Madigan reentered the cave.

"The Esperanza money—every peso of it," he reported, "is in their saddlebags. Let's go."

They dragged Trotter and Joss out to the horses. The cave was deserted, but the telegraph continued to click, in metallic whisperings, behind the sheltering vine.

A Four-Legged Hero

By GENERAL RAFAEL DE NOGALES

MANY were the heroes in the Great War, and long shall people in all participating countries continue to do them honor. But why is it that no one has thought to sing praises of, to erect even a single monument to, that unknown hero, the four-legged soldier—the sore-backed, skinny army horse that humbly toiled and starved and died in the service of its country?

If only I knew where their bones are lying, I would go, some day, to the deserts of Asia to give a decent burial to my dear four-legged companions-in-arms —my three Arab stallions and Circassian ponies, which saved my life in Turkey on more than one occasion.

I will never forget the utter fearlessness with which, for instance, Mesrur—whom we also called Lewee—carried me back and forth for several hours across the dreaded No Man's Land during the memorable Battle of Sheik-Said, near Kut-el-Amara, where we later captured General Townsend and his twelve thousand men.

The night had set in and the roar of cannon, which had been increasing constantly, finally assumed such proportions that Field Marshal von der Goltz deemed it necessary to order Khalil, his Turkish second-in-command, to withdraw our forces to entrenched positions at Felahie.

He ordered me, likewise, to accompany

Khalil, and to keep an eye on him.

In order to allow my orderlies a few hours' rest, I set out alone, mounted on my favorite horse, Mesrur, who was rigged out like a polo pony, with clipped mane and tail and knee protectors. I might add that this cherished companion of mine was a flea bitten black in color, of pure Circassian breed; that he saw by night as well as by day; and that he positively delighted in leaping over trenches, no matter how wide or how forbidding the approach.

While we were trotting toward the front a messenger from the field marshal brought me additional instructions. By the time I was ready to ride, Khalil and his staff had disappeared, swallowed up by the surrounding darkness. None of the commanders of the several units which were on their way to reenforce our battle line was able to tell me Khalil's whereabouts—except a squadron chief who thought he had seen him a short while ago somewhere beyond our second line of entrenchments.

Resolved not to let Khalil out of my sight again, since I had so been instructed by the field marshal, I galloped across the field behind our battle line, which the enemy artillery was sweeping horizontally in order to paralyze the advance of our columns of reserve ammunition.

As a result, fifteen minutes later I found myself wandering about in the darkness, completely lost, in No Man's Land—the zone where our fire crossed the enemy's, and wherein our front and that of the British were occasionally intermixed through the gradual withdrawal by sections of the various units in our battle front, leaving gaps in our lines which were immediately filled by the advancing enemy; so that Turks and Britons alternated along the front like squares on a checkerboard.

In consequence of such confusion, I was finally unable to tell whether I was still in, or quite dangerously beyond, our firing line.

In the midst of that night, dark as a wolf's mouth, our own and the enemy's batteries thundered around me, scarcely allowing me to hear even dimly the officers' commands or the whistles in the ranks, graduating the fire of the musketry.

I saw nothing at all about me but the scarlet flashes from the explosions of the fieldpieces and the greenish violet spurt of the rifle fire, forming an undulating, sparkling ribbon that twisted back and forth like a phosphorescent serpent from north to south across the pitch-dark plain.

In spite of the bullets that kept showering about us with a dry crackle, like sleet, and the exploding enemy shells, my plucky little pony seemingly enjoyed the show.

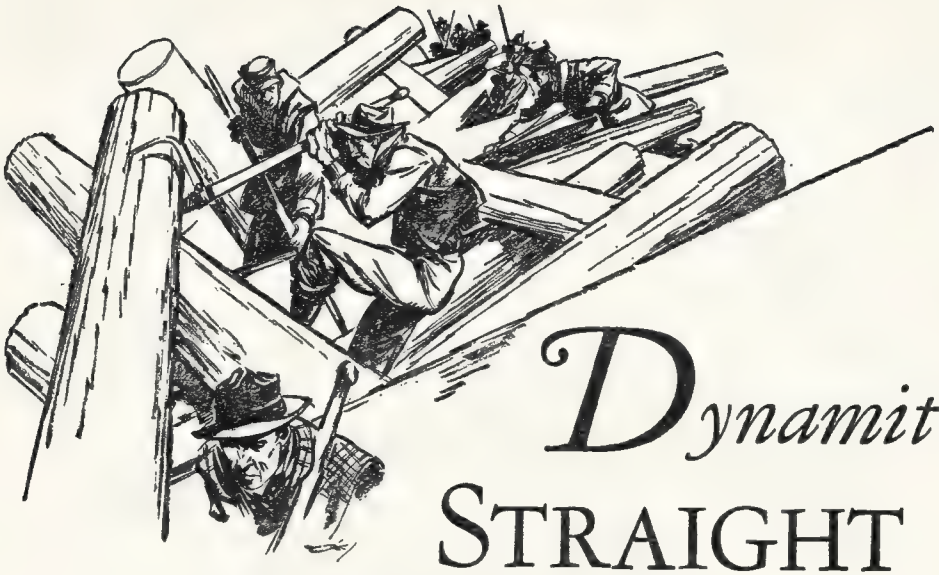
I continued to feel my way ahead cautiously, looking for a way out of that infernal chaos, when suddenly Mesrur stopped in front of a row of lances with bamboo shafts, which were stuck in the ground. And, almost simultaneously, a Hindu sentinel leveled his gun at me, ordering me to dismount. Fortunately I was able to deceive the sentry, thanks to my cork helmet and my prompt reply in English.

Calculating rapidly by the position of the lances and that of the sentry that our front must be behind me, I turned about and, shouting to Mesrur an encouraging word, we started off at breakneck speed.

He leaped over dead and wounded and several wide trenches lined with shining bayonets, until the roar of battle commenced to grow dimmer, and the smoke of the artillery and rifle fire started to fade out.

In the distance the emerald light of our rear guard entrenchments kept beckoning to us, and plucky little Mesrur, although bleeding profusely from several wounds, kept galloping madly, snorting with delight, carrying me to safety across the shell torn, dusty, pitch-dark battlefield.

If there is a heaven for horses Mesrur belongs there because he was a real hero.



Dynamite STRAIGHT

By JAMES STEVENS

HELL was brewing in Smoky Joe's. Two oil lamps hung from the ceiling, dimly illuminating the vast barroom; the circles of yellow light left the logs of the back wall in shadow. A hewn log bar ran along the wall at the right of the door. A half dozen rough customers were ganged there, drinking from tin cups. They were garbed in the stagged pants and calked boots of woodsmen. The meaty bulk of Smoky Joe bulged above the bar as he passed along a jug of white whisky. His Indian eyes glittered in shifty glances at a table in the shadows of the back wall, while his rugged patrons refilled their tin cups and swigged raw liquid fire.

Two men in store clothes faced each other across the table, which was littered with bottles, glasses, an inkpot and pen and papers. One of them was half slumped over the table, with a limp hand propping his head. He was pale and glassy eyed. The other was older, and cold sober. He leaned back in his chair, lighting a cigar, his eyes like a snake's as he watched the younger man through a curl of blue smoke and a breathing match flame.

Such was the scene revealed in three looks to Chip Carmody, river boss for the Lowden Lumber Company, as he peered through a slit in Smoky Joe's front door. Carmody needed no introduction to young Ross Lowden, or to Clint Farret and Smoky Joe. The rough customers were strangers to him, but Carmody ventured a guess about them.

"The original Murder family," he mused grimly. "They couldn't be anybody else, not by their looks. Hell is bound to be a-brewin' with the like of such scuts around."

The river boss bided his time at the door. A shrewd guess and a little luck had brought him into another move in the struggle between the Lowdens and the Sable Timber Company for the French River pineries. It was a three-year fight. Nate Lowden owned the title to the coveted timberlands, but the bigger company was using every means to force him into a cheap sellout. Clint Farret was the Sable agent. For some reason, and by some means, he had inveigled young Ross Lowden into coming up the Menominac River trail to Smoky Joe's.

Chip Carmody could guess the reason and means. It had been a snowless Winter in the North Woods—that is, there had not been half enough snow to make a solid sleigh-haul from the woods to the river banking grounds. All Winter it

had been a fierce timber fight for Chip Carmody in the woods. Now, with the Spring drive, the lack of snow had reduced the needed supply of flood water for bringing down the logs. Carmody and his rivermen had fought the drive as far as Sandy Dam. The logs were held for tonight in the backwater. Tomorrow they must be driven down one of the worst stretches in the Lake States—the run through the sandflats of French River.

Certainly Clint Farret hoped to hold up the Lowden drive. If the logs failed to reach the Menominac market, Nate Lowden's credit would fail and his men would lose the wages for nine months of timber fighting. Chip Carmody was taking the responsibility. He had made up his mind to accept no orders from young Ross Lowden, old Nate's weakling of a son. Whatever was brewing, the river boss was resolute in his determination to protect the lumberjacks who trusted him.

FARRET beckoned Smoky Joe. The bulky trader tramped heavily around the bar and over the puncheons. Carmody was unobserved as he slipped through the door. He sidled along the front wall, then eased on until he was behind Ross Lowden. Farret was staring up at Joe, speaking in a low tone which had a grating sharpness, like steel on a whetstone.

"We must get busy," he said, "before that pack of wolves is too drunk to handle. I've come to an agreement with Lowden, and he has signed up. We'll go on to the dam and take possession of the drive."

"What about him, huh?" Smoky Joe's Indian eyes glinted toward young Lowden, who was sagging into sleep.

"To hell with him!" muttered Farret. "He's through. I've got his signature on a bill of sale, and he's done—out! When you make your mark as a witness, the deal's made. Right here—then we'll move."

"Maybe I'd be a better witness," said Chip Carmody, stepping around Lowden.

His blue eyes were wide and innocent before the startled stares of Farret and the trader. His left hand dropped like a swooping hawk and snatched the bill of sale from the table.

"I can write my name," the river boss drawled. "That would look better than Smoky Joe's mark, hey, Mr. Farret?"

Clint Farret did not move. His hard, beady gaze was fixed on Carmody's mackinaw pocket, which bulged from the boss's right hand.

The Sable agent was no stranger to the tales, tall and otherwise, about the Lowden river boss. Chip Carmody hardly inched over five feet. His men called him the Little Red. The biggest bullies handled him with care. Carmody had a reputation as a wizard with dynamite, not only in breaking log jams, but in battle. He never hesitated at taking apparently hair-raising risks with the yellow sticks which he always toted in that right mackinaw pocket of his.

Clint Farret held his gaze on Carmody's pocketed right hand.

"You'd do well not to horn into this affair," he said evenly. "It's all legal and sound. Nate Lowden is sick. Ross, here, has full power of attorney from his father."

For the moment the river boss made no reply. Sure that Farret would not order an attack on him until argument failed, Carmody backed toward the middle of the barroom to get light on the bill of sale. The involved legal phrases meant little to him. But one item was plain. Clint Farret had bought the Lowden drive for one dollar and "other considerations". The latter would be Lowden notes. There was no provision for the payment of wages.

"Come here, Carmody." Farret's tone was ingratiating. "You can't do anything about that. Sit down and we'll come to terms. Be reasonable. Let's have a drink."

"And what if I don't?" said the little boss gently.

Farret's grim nod included Smoky Joe and the staring pack at the bar.

"The Murder family," said Carmody, his blue eyes still pleasant and bright. "They must be close relatives of yours, Mr. Farret. Loyal to you, hey?"

"Try them." Farret smiled like a mask. "I'll admit they are all armed. We expected a fight at your river camp. Your calling alone like this makes every-

thing much simpler and better."

"Maybe. Only one item bothers me. That is, what about the wages due my sixty rivermen?"

"I'll pay your own double," said Farret significantly. "If—"

"If what?" demanded Carmody, as the agent paused.

"If you'll sit down here for a friendly little drink."

"I'm tasty, Mr. Farret. What have you got?"

"What'll you have, Mr. Carmody?"

"I'll tell you what I'll have."

Carmody's expression of innocent good humor had vanished. His eyes assumed a glint of blue steel. He chopped out his words:

"Me, I don't give a hell's bang about either you or the Lowdens. But I've got sixty men. The logs were got out of the woods and driven this far because said sixty followed me like soldiers—and that there Lowden drive is goin' through the sandflats and down the Menominac because it's the only chance of my jacks for a payoff! You ask me what I'll have, Mr. Farret. Well, I'll tell you what you'll all have—dynamite straight, by the old mackinaw!"

With that, Carmody was moving like a scared bobcat, whipping about and leaping for a table under one of the lamps. One spring took him to the top. In the same motion he knocked a lamp chimney flying in a shower of glass. The yellow flame flared from the wick, blazing around the bill of sale in Carmody's left hand.

At the same time the right hand of the little boss jerked two yellow cylinders from his right mackinaw pocket. Clint Farret was screaming like a wild animal at his pack. Smoky Joe and the Murder family surged for the table. All in the click of seconds Carmody jabbed the snouts of the two sticks into the flame, fired a fuse that jutted like a candle wick from one, then dropped to the floor amid floating bits of charred paper. He kept the table between the gang and himself.

The fuse spark sputtered close to the sticks, like a wicked red eye. Smoky Joe and his mates halted, milled back from the table. One of the savages clawed for his gun. Carmody dived under the table, then skidded the yellow sticks over the puncheons. A furious stamping of calked boots followed. A roar of panic boomed around.

Farret had lunged from his chair and was running for the back door. The Murder family stampeded after him, with Smoky Joe like a bull leading the herd. Carmody dived over the puncheons for the dynamite sticks, scooped them up, then swung over to the wall table. Ross Lowden had passed out, slumping to the floor. Carmody dropped to a knee beside him, then, using the table as a shield, he hurled his crude bomb at the barrels of white whisky behind the bar.

Thunder broke through the big room; the floor quaked; the walls shook. Staves, splinters and liquor showered the table behind which Carmody crouched. A lamp fell with a tinny clatter. Flames leaped from the oil and spread over the alcohol soaked floor.

Ross Lowden groaned stupidly as the river boss dragged him to the front door. Out in the shadows of the yard Carmody's hard little hands lifted him with a jerk, and then the swing of a calked boot sent the young lumberman sprawling.

"There's a morsel of what you need," growled Carmody. "I only hope you get it all when the Murder family finds you here."

Then Chip Carmody plunged on through the bush for the river trail.

ON THE bank above Sandy Dam the smoke from the cook's fire rose in lazy swirls and faded against a black and sparkling sky. Supper was long past, but kettles swung on over the sinking embers, black shapes in dull red light. Pipe bowls glowed outside the fading fringe of firelight. The rivermen talked in weary and despondent tones.

"No use hopin' the drive won't hang up in the sandflats," croaked grizzled Andy Buell, summing up the general opinion. "She'll never git around Rump Bend in this here low water. We got about as much chance of a payoff as a hen would have o' hatchin' eggs on a nest of porkypine quills."

Shaggy heads nodded in agreement. Dismal growls of complaint sounded on

around the circle. Matt Brucker, the jam boss, Chip Carmody's second in command, glowered silently over a dipper of boiled tea. It was his duty to suppress any such outbreak in the absence of the little boss. But young Matt Brucker kept a scowling silence. He was a king-jack on the drive and in the woods, and he still failed to understand why he should rate second place with such a runt of a woodsman as the Little Red. Young Matt had a notion that Carmody's dynamite was mainly bluff. However, the jam boss had kept such opinions to himself. Old Nate Lowden would have to retire one of these days. Young Ross and young Matt were prime friends. So Matt had been satisfied to work on under Carmody and wait for the main chance.

But now he was ready to rebel. He listened to Andy Buell ramble on, and he agreed with the veteran of the woods.

"Here's how she looks to me," croaked Andy. "Somethin', even a miser'ble somethin', is better'n nothin' at all. If this here drive hangs up in the flats, the logs will lay there and rot and be et by worms till high water next Fall. And if it's correc' the Sable outfit wants to buy the drive right here and hold it in the backwater, why, I hope they do it. Somethin's better'n nothin', you betcher."

"But they couldn't pay more'n a third of the market price, figurin' to hold the logs over," protested a doubter.

"Third's better'n nothin'," insisted Andy.

"Howd' you know we'd get any of it?"

"You know Nate Lowden. His men come first."

"Mebbe. But we've heerd plenty talk that the Sable people has some of his notes. If they was used in the trade, where'd we be? Besides, Ross Lowden is runnin' things now. He's a saplin'."

"He's the man you're workin' for, and he'll see to it you're paid, right enough," growled Matt Brucker, speaking for the first time, with the brash certainty of youth. "I'm bankin' on Ross to a finish. He'll be here any time with the Sable agent to sell off the drive. In the mornin' she'll be home, boys, home for us all, by the old mackinaw!"

There was an excited stir around the circle. A dozen voices demanded to know more. But Matt Brucker clamped his jaws. At sunset an Indian had brought him a message from Ross Lowden, ordering him to hold the drive at the dam despite Carmody. So far young Matt had played a square game with the little boss. The secret stuff left him with an uneasy sense of guilt. But the situation was desperate. And Matt Brucker trusted Ross Lowden. He was resolved to carry out the orders in the message.

"I've told you all I know," he muttered, in answer to the insistent questions. "You men just trust Ross Lowden."

"Since when did he take charge of this drive?" cut in a voice from the shadows beyond the circle. "You jacks trust who you please, but you'll take orders from me. What's all this row about?"

Carmody swung into the circle of red firelight. He stood there, a chipmunk of a man among the giants of his crew. His hair was a tangled sorrel mane under a rag of a Scotch cap. An unkempt beard bristled from his gaunt cheeks. His mackinaw was tattered from the wear and tear of fighting pine timber down the river. He stood like a stump amid a blaze of questions and demands.

"All right," Carmody chopped in, after a moment. His gaze hammered Matt Brucker. "I pegged that Injun givin' you a note," he said flatly. "I suspicioned something, and, havin' to go down the pole trail anyhow, I took a look in at Smoky Joe's. There I found Ross Lowden drunk as a fool, lettin' Clint Farret rob us all. Farret invited me to have something with 'em. I did," said Carmody, his eyes twinkling for an instant. "Dynamite straight! Seemed kinder strong for all, even Smoky Joe. Never done 'em a particle of good. And now everybody turn in, for at daylight it'll be hurrah, boys, hurrah, for takin' down the drive!"

Matt Brucker lunged to his feet. He towered over his chief like a red pine over a scrub oak.

"She's no use, Carmody," he growled defiantly. "The logs are bound to hang

up at Rump Bend, and we'll lose the works. We're goin' to hold the drive right here at Sandy Dam!"

There was iron discipline on the log drives. Matt Brucker's defiance was like mutiny on a ship at sea. But Carmody took it calmly.

"We're takin' down the drive at daylight," he said. "There's a good chance for us. No harm in tellin' you now there's a cache of twenty cases of dynamite in Bird Crick. I saw to that last Fall, to guard against low water. When the logs jam, we'll blast 'em on. Give 'em dynamite," said Carmody mildly, to the gaping jacks. "Dynamite straight. The cache is safe and dry. My main reason for takin' down the pole trail was to see to that. That's all. You bullies roll in."

"You're the river boss." Matt Brucker reluctantly gave in, seeing that Carmody's bluff was going over with the jacks. It was still just that—a bluff—to young Matt. "I'm takin' your orders," he growled on. "But if the drive does hang up, then we'll be man to man. And then I'll chaw you to a mangle, dynamite and all! Just tellin' you."

"And if we don't hang up," said Carmody, unmoved. "If we do get through?"

"I'll—" For an instant Matt Brucker hesitated, almost convinced against his will by the quiet force of the little boss; then he yielded to a blustering urge. "Why, I'll—I'll let you peel me a stick of that dynamite of yours," he jeered, "and then, by the old mackinaw, I'll eat the raw powder like a bannaner before the crew!"

"Dynamite straight," said Carmody softly. "It's hard to take, Matt. But it's your bet, mind. And I'll call on you to pay up in the Horn Saloon when we make Menominac."

It was a bet. Such dares and wagers were common on the frontier. And one who failed to make a loss good instantly lost caste. Matt Brucker looked sort of cornered as he rolled into his blankets.

THE Lowden drive was going down. It started as dawn cracked through the groves of hardwoods to the east and lifted the river shadows. The mackinawed timber fighters swarmed the log masses in the backwater of the dam. The sluice gate yawned. Giant pine timbers cannonaded down in a storm of spray. The river roared.

Chip Carmody heaved with relief as he saw Matt Brucker leading the jam crew on the head of the drive, as it formed below the dam. The smoky young giant was again performing like a king-jack.

There was no sign of the Murder family down in the sandflats or up here in the bush. Carmody hoped that Clint Farret had given up this particular play for the French River pineries. But the little boss had no intention of dropping his guard. It was the Sable agent's job to break Nate Lowden. Last night's ruckus had proved that Farret was willing to take a desperate chance.

The Little Red and his veterans sluiced logs, working the main mass steadily through backwater, combing drifters from the mire along the ebbing water line. Below the dam a river of logs ground on in a twisting course through the sandflats. Mackinaws were hung up as the sun rose high. Red shirts were vivid against black timber, yellow water, white spray, and the green of hardwoods and bush on the banks. Arms swung like the limbs of gale-lashed pines. The steel of peaveys flashed in silver streaks. Logs tumbled and splashed from broken jams on the sandbars. The young jacks leaped like rabbits over the bucking and twisting sticks, following Matt Brucker from charge to charge.

Carmody's faith in the young giant revived by the time noon struck, with two miles of pine logs still running free in the flats. Yet the little boss had a strong sense of lurking danger, a conviction that Clint Farret would not give up so easily. In the afternoon Brucker and his men worked their way out of Carmody's view from the dam. That instinctive uneasiness grew in him. At last the river boss left the sluicing in charge of Andy Buell and struck out down the drive. He found the jam crew jacks holding their own against the treacherous bars. The logs moved steadily on for the big timber fight at Rump Bend.

Carmody greeted his jam boss casually.

"Goin' good so far," he said. "Will you handle 'er from here to the Bend, Matt?"

"I will, or else bust seven ribs tryin'," growled the young giant soulfully. He was breathing hard. He swabbed streams of sweat from his swarthy face. "How's the water holdin' up?" he asked.

"Plenty to carry us through—if there's no more than one bad jam. I expect one in the Bend, but we're ready for it."

Carmody was balanced easily on a big butt. As he spoke he stared over a quarter mile of sandflats at a bushy bench. His vision cut into a deep gully, through which Bird Creek trickled toward French River. There his precious half ton of dynamite was hidden. Three hundred yards up the bench a clump of Norway pines jutted above the bush. It marked the site of the old trading station, which Smoky Joe Gaston had restored for his own poisonous traffic.

The keen gaze of the little boss searched every spot of the bush and timber. He observed no sign of human movement. All seemed well, yet Carmody's uneasy sense of a hidden threat would not down. Something made him turn sharply again toward Matt Brucker. The jam boss was on a log ten feet away, swaying in balance. Carmody surprised a troubled, apparently furtive look in his eyes.

"What's on your mind, Matt?" Carmody demanded sharply.

Brucker opened his mouth to speak, then hesitated, his face setting in an expression of sullen stubbornness.

"Nothin'," he muttered. "She's your drive. I ditched the Lowden kid and took your orders. I'm fightin' timber, that's all. And I'm just tellin' you again, in case you've forgot, that if the drive hangs up for the Summer in the Bend, I'll make you into pitcher puzzle parts. Just to remind you I still mean exactly that, Mister Carmody."

"Thanks for the *mister*," said Carmody mildly. "And don't you forget the reverse item, Matt. Dynamite straight in the Horn Saloon."

"Bluff!" jeered Matt Brucker. "And I'm callin' this here one to a finish."

"Fair enough," said Carmody. He flashed a hard grin. "For my part, I never call bluffs—I only make 'em!"

Matt Brucker blinked over that for a moment, then shrugged his great shoulders and swung away to his men. The little boss frowned after him, then turned again toward the flats of the right bank. That uneasy spirit was working in him stronger than ever. Carmody was certain that Matt knew something he was keeping to himself. Something about Clint Farret. The young hellion might have treachery in his mind. He might have seen Farret—sold out.

"No," Carmody stoutly denied the suspicion. "The lad is a woodsman, a timber fighter. And he'll fight fair. I'd swear to it."

But the little boss was not so sure when he found the tracks of calked boots in the sand of the river trail, huge tracks that must have been made by the young giant of a jam boss.

They led toward the bush below Smoky Joe's. As Carmody reached this point in the trail, Clint Farret stepped out from a clump of popple and barred his way.

"GOOD day, Mr. Carmody." The Sable agent spoke as if he were on fine terms with the Lowden boss. He wore his mask-like smile. "I've waited for you," he went on, "since I saw you coming down the drive."

Carmody's right hand had dropped into his mackinaw pocket. His gaze darted behind Farret, searching the bush. Then he stared intently at the Sable agent. The man was fresh and neat in new corduroys. His smile seemed fixed. There was a glint of mockery in Farret's beady eyes. It disturbed Carmody profoundly. Farret appeared to be confident, even contemptuous. Had Matt Brucker actually sold out to him, then? The question hammered furiously in Carmody's mind.

"I'll be havin' no palaver with such a snake as you are," said the little boss deliberately. "I know you've tried to buy off Matt Brucker, for the ruin of a wild but decent lad. But it's no use, Mr. Farret. He's a true woodsman. The drive is goin' down."

"I envy you your faith." Farret

smiled. "But it's foolish."

"He never sold out, Matt didn't," asserted the little boss stoutly.

"Who said he did?" mocked Farret. "Not me, I'm sure. Why should I buy him off? He admits that the drive is sure to hang up in Rump Bend. Well, what then? Unless there's a miracle or a heavy rain, the river's flow will fall steadily. It does invariably at this season. You'll use all the storage water from the dam. Then what? May I tell you, Mr. Carmody?"

The little boss said nothing; he stood fast, his blue eyes boring into Farret's, striving to pierce the veil of mockery. The man's confidence must have some substance. Was it a grip on Matt Brucker? Or was it—Carmody whitened under his tan—the discovery of the dynamite cache? Had Matt— But he stubbornly forced back the new suspicion. The big lad was no traitor—

"This will happen," Farret continued. "You'll be blacklisted in the Menominac country. Every lumberman will think of you as the river boss who ruined Nate Lowden by foolhardiness. Well, I'm offering you a last chance. I'm still willing to buy the drive at the original price I offered Ross Lowden. Back up the deal, and I'll see that you're given charge of the Sable company's biggest camp!"

Farret stared compellingly as he finished speaking. Carmody thought fast. What was the game now? It would be a ruinous deal for Farret, in case the drive did hang up. But the little woodsman had no sense of the snaky trails of business. He fell back on his one iron-bound resolution.

"I'm takin' down the drive," he stated flatly.

"You're a fool, Carmody!"

"Nothin' else? I could use up a hour namin' all the things you are, from blister rust in a pinetop down to swamp snake! Give my regards to the Murder family, Mr. Farret, and so long!"

The little boss whirled on his calks and struck off in a swift stride up the river trail. He could feel the venomous gaze of Clint Farret on his mackinawed back. The fellow would strike again. Every instinct in Carmody told him that. But he could not figure how, for an open attack on the drive would bring the law. Carmody would not yield his faith in Matt Brucker. The dynamite cache—if Farret had discovered that—

But there would be no time to settle that doubt before nightfall. Right now every man in the Lowden crew was needed to fight timber on without a big jam, until the drive swung into the Bend.

DOWN the river, hour by hour, the Lowden drive was labored through the sandflats. Chip Carmody toiled feverishly with his veteran jacks in the rear. Combing the banks, clearing the bars, sacking out muddy backwater pools, they kept the logs moving in a solid body toward Rump Bend. The jack-pines on the western ridges were black against the low, red sun when the head of the drive rolled and pounded toward the sand bluff that formed the Bend's right flank.

Sunset, and an exhausted gang of rivermen. There was no chance of fighting the logs through tonight. Carmody had planned the battle accordingly. He ordered Andy Buell and four other old-timers to return to the dam and close the sluice until only the river's regular flow was pouring through the gate. The remaining storage water was to be saved for the morning attack. The rivermen should now keep the drive moving as long as possible. When it jammed solidly, the logs should rest until dawn.

Matt Brucker and his young rivermen worked the head logs into the hollow of the crescent shaped bluff. Until twilight they held their own, prying and poking the ponderous sticks of pine into the foaming eddies of the twisting current, on toward deep, open water. Then the main body of the drive bore down, with heaving masses of logs. More and more of the timbers grounded on the bar that sloped from the flats on the left of the Bend. Inexorably the jam formed, solidified, logs crossing, piling up, grinding and splintering from the increasing push of timber in the rear.

The sparkling blackness of full night fell on six miles of stalled logs. The river's flow had fallen steadily. The day's battle was over. Matt Brucker led his weary crew to the new camp.

Carmody and the rear crew were already gathered about the supper fire.

"Good work, Matt," was Carmody's hearty greeting. "You eat and rest. In the mornin' we'll blast this here drive in sections around Rump Bend. Me and you have just started to fight timber."

Matt Brucker loomed more like a giant than ever as he stood in the firelight. He set his fists on his hips and glowered down at the little boss.

"This here jam's a heller," he said ominously. "Totin' a lot for one little man, you are. Don't forget it. The wages of sixty men, when you could have got a part payoff from Clint Farret. I still aim to take my part out of your hide if we lose."

Carmody did not seem to hear. Doubts were closing about him again like cold, black shadows. He again saw Clint Farret's mask of a smile and mocking gaze. He thought he was maybe being a soft-hearted fool about Matt.

The little boss mused and brooded over his supper plate. He realized that he was on the ragged edge of endurance. Red-hot bands seemed to be burning into his shoulders, where his peavey handle had ground into raw flesh while sacking logs out of the shallows. His swollen feet, cut by the river sand that had sifted into his boots, throbbed with dull pain. He was so sleepy that if he once relaxed he feared he would be sunk forever. But that aroused sixth sense of his, the sense of a savage on the trail, demanded action. Before he slept the twenty cases of dynamite must be safe in the river camp.

The wornout jacks were already turning in. Matt Brucker and some of his men were still awake, brooding silently over their pipes. Carmody shoved himself to his feet and faced them.

"I'm cleanin' out the cache," he said, his voice harsh with strain. "There's twenty fifty-pound boxes to tote into camp from Bird Crick. I'm givin' no orders, but it's plain ten men can make it in two trips."

"What's the rush?" muttered Matt Brucker. "Why not in the mornin' when we're rested up?"

Carmody felt a new surge of suspicion.

"You know why, Matt!" he said angrily. "And you can go to hell! I played a lone hand last night, and I can play one again."

He swung abruptly away from the camp-fire, plunging into the shadows of the sandflats. His trail instinct headed Carmody toward Bird Creek. Wrath smoked from him in the darkness. The tension and strain of the timber fight were getting him. For long minutes anger against Matt Brucker blazed in the little boss as he plowed through the sand. Then he got a grip on his caution again. He kept on past Bird Creek, deciding to prowl around Smoky Joe's before exploring the cache.

TWENTY minutes later the little boss emerged in the clearing of the old trading post. There was not a gleam from the black bulk of the log building. No sound sifted from the walls as Carmody crept close. The doors, both front and back, were locked. Carmody tried a window, clawing up like a cat over the logs and chinks. He hesitated for an instant before the blank blackness, then a jolt from his mackinawed elbow shattered the glass. Carmody peered into the heavy gloom of Smoky Joe's barroom.

His ear caught a sound that might have been made by packrats dragging stuff over the puncheons. Carmody listened for a moment, then, hooking his left elbow through the broken window, he reached into his right mackinaw pocket and brought up a candle-like stick.

To that Carmody struck a match. A smoky flame curled from the stick's end. Chip Carmody was no reckless fool with high explosive. When necessity demanded he would take great risk, but the yellow sticks he ordinarily carried in the pocket were harmless—a bluff, as Matt Brucker suspected. This blazing stick was a torch, a dynamite casing packed with dry sawdust and pine pitch.

Carmody shoved the smoky torch through the window. The flare illumined the wrecked bar. Behind the wreckage lay Ross Lowden, bound, gagged and groaning.

The little boss smashed through the window. In half a minute the young lumberman was sitting up, white and

wild eyed in the torchlight.

"Talk fast," demanded Carmody. "Where's the gang?"

"Farret turned on me," groaned Ross Lowden. "Like a rattler— I've been a fool, Carmody."

"That's no news. What's happened? Blast it, talk!"

Lowden was shaking. He fought hard for self-control.

"They thought I was still passed out," he said, forcing the words. "But I overheard Farret and Smoky Joe this morning. Joe had trailed the tracks you made last night. Found the dynamite cache. It's on Smoky Joe's land. Didn't you know that, Carmody? The gang's been hiding there all day, primed to shoot you off as a trespasser. I tried to stop them, but—"

"Never mind the rest." Carmody was thinking swiftly. New life leaped in him from the realization that young Matt had been no traitor. "Hoist up and out of here," snapped the little boss. "Maybe I'll get jugged for it, but Smoky Joe is due for a real burn-out this trip. All I want is for him to fetch his gang back to fight fire."

"If you'd only told me you'd cached dynamite," complained Lowden.

"Me, I could tell you a dozen *ifs*," Carmody cut in. "But I got me a crime to do. Up and out of here!"

The little boss boosted Ross Lowden through the window. With his torch still blazing, he followed like a squirrel, running for the front of the building as soon as his calks struck the dirt. The wind was from the river. In three minutes it was lifting a sheet of flame up the log wall from the blazes started by the torch.

"Come on!" barked Carmody. "She's a run for it now!"

He set off at a swift pace down the tote road, which led to a bridge over Bird Creek. Young Lowden stumbled and panted after him. As he rounded a sharp bend Carmody heard a roar of excited voices ahead. He skidded to a halt and pulled Lowden into the bush beside him.

Smoky Joe was bawling for his bullies to follow him and fight the fire that blazed furiously now above the clearing. Clint Farret shrieked for one of the gang to stay on guard with him. But Carmody counted seven shadowy shapes in the pack that pounded past. Smoky Joe and all the Murder family.

Clint Farret was like a wolf howling alone when Chip Carmody charged him. And like a wolf he cowered and whined under the surprise attack. Carmody drove him back into the gully and down to the cache. Then the little boss relighted his torch.

"You'll hold your gang off this trip, Farret," Carmody said savagely. "I'll shoot off the whole cache if you let 'em attack."

It was no idle threat. This was not the first time that the Little Red had resolved to win or die. But luck was still on his side of the game.

"You travel, and travel fast, over to the night camp," he ordered Ross Lowden. "Fetch back Matt Brucker and twenty men. We're totin' this here dynamite to Rump Bend, and takin' down the drive."

MATT BRUCKER and twenty jacks toted the half ton of dynamite to the Bend, and Chip Carmody and his crew took down the drive. It was a two-day timber fight, an endless attack with peaveys and dynamite on jams that continuously piled up on the Bend's big sandbar. The jacks snatched food and sleep like soldiers in battle, until the whole drive was floating in deep water for the Menominac.

Chip Carmody was the dynamiting jam-breaker. He held his post without rest through the forty-eight hours, scrambling over quaking mountains of logs to fire his shots whenever jams defied the peavey men, leading the latter when the pine sticks ran free again. He seemed to be working in a gray haze that grew thicker with every hour. But one light blazed through it. Every minute young Matt Brucker was fighting by his side. It was the powerful young giant who risked his neck on every jam, gouging out holes for Carmody's strings of dynamite sticks.

It was the jam boss who charged first after each shot, lunging furiously over the pine timbers that bucked and whirled in a welter of white water and

spray. And at the end Chip Carmody admitted honestly to himself that without Matt Brucker he would have failed, even with dynamite.

"You win," said young Matt grimly, as the last log was peaveyed into deep water. "I was a wild headed fool. But I never sold out. I know what you think. But I swear it's not so. I was a fool, but I've fought you fair, Chip Carmody."

"And we both win, Matt Brucker." The little boss could speak only in a hoarse whisper, but it was with a grin that sunned his weathered face. "I could never really doubt you. What do you say we shake hands on another French River season together?"

Shrewd blue eyes twinkled against a bold black gaze of youth. The light of comradeship shone there, the wordless feeling that binds men who have endured much together.

"There's our bet," said young Matt at last, grinning wide. "You won it, Chip. And if I eat a peeled stick of dynamite like a bananer, how'll I ever live to team up with you next season?"

"You won't never see me in the Horn Saloon." The little boss twinkled. "Me, I never have nothin' but dynamite straight, and the Horn don't stock it!"

SALVAGE

By HARRY KEMP

I CAN NOT answer why I came to be bereft
Of hands. There dropped a gale. The waters burst like smoke.
And soon I found myself abandoned to the seas.
My sails flapped rent to shreds where adverse thunders broke:
But true ships have a heart as strong as their own oak.

I had no one to steer; and yet I put about.
I stood up to the wind. I found the sea more kind
Than those so small of soul they left me for the boats:
So good a ship as I, with such sure skill designed,
With horror I beheld the captain drop behind.

Then resolution gripped my beams from stem to stern.
My figurehead resolved that it would lend me sight.
Ten storms worse than that first, they raked me fore and aft
I trod on through the day, I drove on through the night:
I held an even keel in every gale's despite.

My cargo, too, was good; for, half around the world,
Another continent was crying for its need.
Some instinct given to ships woke lively through my boards
That without mate or crew vouchsafed me to proceed.
My courage cries for help. All full-manned ships, give heed!

If you can spare some men to rig a jury-mast
And dare for the reward, greater than gold will be
(Though there'll be bags of that) your uncoined recompense:
A conscience sound as oak, commending bravery
That saves a noble ship abandoned thus at sea!

Blood Royal

By F. R. BUCKLEY

PART I

SLOWLY, carefully, indeed with the motion distinctive of invalids doubtful as to motor centers, the *Joan Shaw* came out of the Channel mists into the early morning sunshine of the upper Mersey. Ahead of her, up that stream which is the tradesmen's entrance of the world, Liverpool smoked and glittered; the *Joan Shaw,* her rust streaming hawsepipes steadfast as her bow wave died from the bubble of "half speed" to the flat surge of "dead slow", seemed for a moment to regard the city with eyes bleared by desire.

Then, swinging as a ship may whose steering gear is not what it might be, she surveyed her surroundings and from her siren sent a strangled groan. To starboard, insolent with one red funnel, and secure in a bourgeois respectability that covered even her current dumping of garbage by the stern, lay the *Lancastria;* to port the *Duchess of Ayr,* her bow cocked aristocratically at all newcomers, her racing stacks laid back like the eyebrows of a fleshy duchess interviewing the duke's latest chorine. Midway between which paragons the *Joan Shaw* groaned again, anchored, and was realistically sick through her ash-lifts.

She gave—to, for instance, the *Lancastria's* second mate, out for his morning stroll—the impression of having been in deep trouble; which she had, though not the kind of trouble he thought. He was a nice, clean minded young man, that second mate, as well up in the laws of storms as he was ignorant of the finer technique of gun running; and so it was only natural that, surveying the *Joan's* bent forecastle rails, noting the loss of two portside boats and observing the plaster of boards which obscured five or six of her stern ports, he should give to the elements credit which belonged strictly to the San Pablonian Republic.

For, in point of fact, what ailed the *Joan* was that she had been fired on; nay, more, that she had been hit. Aye, further, she had been struck by two shells which—quite unaccording to San Pablonian custom—exploded. One shell shocked her steering motor, and the other, which burst precisely three feet forward of the bridge dodger, blew her captain and chief officer very flat and dead against the charthouse bulkhead.

It had remained for the second officer to bring her home, shaking off the San Pablonian gunboat in a fog, inventing a storm in which the captain and mate could be washed overboard, falsifying the logbook accordingly and coaching

the crew to match; sacrificing boats to the said storm of the imagination and laboriously twisting davits to accord with such loss; and otherwise protecting the good name of Halsey, Wall, Parkins & Wilberforce, Limited.

Actually there was no Halsey, Wall, or Wilberforce; only Mr. Parkins, a churchwarden in the Church of the Transfiguration; by whom and whose standing in the community the second mate considered himself to have done quite well. Down in his cabin—naked save for a bottle in one hand, a glass in the other, and a pre-shoregoing bowler hat worn expansively on the back of the head—he was expressing this conviction to the third officer.

"Though, begad, I didn't like that pilot," said Mr. Clancy, scowling at the bottle and smiting its contents hip and thigh, "with his 'What's yer Brussels carpet for?' when he saw that canvas matting on the bridge. Good job we got those dents out of the bulkhead, or even an old foo-foo like him'd ha' guessed something. Well, drink up."

"It's a bad job," said the third mate, "we couldn't patch that hole in the funnel so's it'd look like it was made by somethin' else than a 4.7. Because there's foo-foos in the shipyard that's goin' to—"

"Yeah?" asked Mr. Clancy.

He was by no means a bad looking man, in what might be called the destructive mode; but to pause halfway into a boiled shirt did not become him. The glossy white of the bosom, at the moment curved in shining parabolas about his features generally, gave his face a thought too much the appearance of having been carved out of a walnut log with an ax, and added incongruity to the startling lividity of the scar which ran from one eye to the corner of its owner's mouth.

Moreover, boiled shirts are not usually worn over chests as bearlike as Mr. Clancy's; nor do they contain arms whose innumerable tattoo marks become motion pictures at each movement of the underlying muscles Perhaps conscious of which facts, Mr. Clancy burst the shirt resoundingly down the back and groped behind him for a blue one with a soft collar. During all of which time, and during the subsequent buttoning of the new attempt around a neck slightly too thick for it, he regarded his subordinate with a blue eye before which Mr. Wilks frankly cowered.

"Yeah?" repeated the acting captain. "Well, I'm just in a frame of mind to leave *that* to Mr. Parkins. See? You can't make omelets without breakin' eggs, an' you can't keep about three establishments goin' without runnin' guns. An' you can't run guns without gettin' fired on once in awhile—at least, gettin' your ships fired on, an' the poor damn fools that man 'em for you. My job was to bring the ship home, see? An' I've done it, see? An' now it's up to Mr. Parkins to shove her into drydock. Or," added Mr. Clancy, finishing his drink, "anywhere else he feels like. Have another. Gosh, it's good to be home!"

"You ain't home, are you?"

"I'm an American, an' proud of it," said Mr. Clancy, getting into his trousers. "Born in St. Louis. But home's where the heart is, an' right now I'm near the very land where my ancestors used to be kings."

"You mean Ireland?"

"Do I act Scotch? An' let me tell you they *were* kings. That's why I went to sea."

The third mate considered.

"That's why you went to—?"

"Certainly." The second mate buttoned his vest with a regal motion. "Had a good job in a brewery—been makin' twenty-five—ten pounds a week by this time. Couldn't stick it. People givin' me orders. People backchattin' me—all I could do, fine 'em fifty cents. An' no chance of gettin' to be boss. Get me? Those old ducks were boss—Brian Boru an' that crowd. An' I've got their gore chasin' around in me right here. I can *feel* it. Get me?"

The third mate, who had once heard vaguely that his own grandfather had been a china painter, took an unwise drink and choked on it.

"Are you laughin'!" demanded Mr. Clancy terribly; but abandoned this suspicion before evidence of the most convincing.

He patted Mr. Wilks's back until the

worst was over and deposited him, crowing, back on the settee.

"Pour it over your head," said the acting captain reproachfully, "but don't waste it. Here—an' that's the last. An' now for Lord Street, an' tell old Parkins what they did to his diddums yacht, an' collect my little old honorarium. Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the—"

"Your little what?" asked Mr. Wilks weakly.

"Honorarium. It's French for something," said Mr. Clancy, buttoning his jacket, "that you get over an' above, if you know what I mean. Like what I'll get over an' above my pay as actin' captain. Fifteen-pound-ten, I figure it. An' then probably any little bonus they want to slap on for meritorious service. Say—"

Struck by an idea, the second mate seated himself again and drove a barlike finger into Mr. Wilks's ribs.

"Say—just struck me! We both been doin' double shifts—me for the captain, an' you for poor old Snodgrass. Well, if I get extra pay, why shouldn't you? Boy, leave it to me."

"But—"

"Leave it to me!" said Mr. Clancy, rising and refusing the crown with one gesture. "I'll let 'em figure it out, an' they'll prob'ly gyp you, but I haven't got time now to—"

"Listen, Clancy—" Mr. Wilks, recovered from his choking, but apparently in the grip of a greater evil, had arisen and was standing almost in an attitude of prayer. "Listen, Clancy—don't say anything about that."

"What?"

"Don't say anything about that. No. No jokin'. I'm a married man, an'—"

"What's that got to do with—"

"I don't want to go dock paddlin'. Listen, Clancy—"

"Dock paddlin'? Who the hell," demanded the acting captain, "said anything about dock paddlin'?"

"Listen. Parkins will be if you go askin' him for that. Listen. I've been with this firm. This is your first trip. You don't know that old—"

"But it's your pay!"

"Yes," said Mr. Wilks hopelessly, "an' it's my job, an' it seems to me that I got some right—"

"You mean to stand there an' tell me," roared the descendant of Irish kings, "that that old inhabitant of the cities of the plain'd try to do you out of your pay, when you've brought his ship home for him when he should've lost the damn teakettle ten times over—an' you're goin' to let him?"

"Well, it's my—"

"Yes or no?"

"Yes!"

For a moment Mr. Clancy stood stunned, staring at his subordinate like one who ponders incredible things.

"Yeah?" he said at last. "Well—I ain't."

With which he left the *Joan Shaw* and, an hour later, appeared at 56 Lord Street, in the offices of Halsey, Wall, Parkins & Wilberforce, Ltd.

THEY were nice offices; and especially was that a nice office to which Mr. Clancy—having stated his name and qualities, and refused to talk to any one but the head of the firm—was finally admitted; just the office, indeed, for a shipowner who was also a churchwarden.

Before Mr. Parkins's seat hung, for instance, a portrait of his Majesty King George, suitably dressed in naval uniform; from other walls the departed Messrs. Halsey, Wall & Wilberforce gazed down benignantly on their surviving partner. In a glass case near a window a scale model represented the motor driven vessel which the firm would order just as soon as it had arranged the scuttling of the *Grace Jones;* and in another case stood the quarter-inch representation of the *Albert George* which, being fired on and sunk with all hands in water so deep that specimens of her cargo were unavailable, had almost involved British taxpayers in an expensive war.

On the floor was a carpet which entrapped one's ankles and represented symbolically the triumph of honesty in ancient Persia; and about the silken area of this were divers chairs of the type customarily occupied by medieval Italian dukes when giving audience.

Selecting the least knobby looking of

which, Mr. Clancy proceeded to seat himself. Across a flat topped mahogany desk he faced Mr. Parkins in the flesh—quite a lot of it—and two other men, one of whom was the marine superintendent. The other had gray eyes—quite remarkable gray eyes—now fixed with an expression almost equally remarkable on Mr. Clancy's own.

"Good mornin'—"

"Who asked you to sit down?" said the man with the gray eyes.

"When interrupted, I was sayin'," observed Mr. Clancy, " 'Good mornin', gentlemen.' In reply to yours of even date, I would reply that nobody asked me to sit down, an' that I wouldn't advise anybody to try to make me stand up. I've been doin' enough standin' up these last three weeks—on a bridge, with my eyes full of sleep an' my ears full of the north wind. An' I'm here to make my report—as captain; an' draw my pay—also as captain. Gunmen to the contrary notwithstandin'. Get me?"

"Go ahead," said Mr. Parkins, leaning forward.

From behind his left shoulder the man with the gray eyes shot him a questioning, appealing glance, which the shipowner ignored. Cigar in the corner of his wide thin mouth, the upper reaches of his capacious paunch making a heap on the desktop, he concentrated an unmoving gaze upon his visitor. About the top of his bald head, sunlight reflected through a fuzz of reddish hair seemed to crown him with a halo.

"Did you deliver the rifles?"

"Yes, sir. The captain reported by radio. In code."

"Well—then what?"

"I reported—"

"I'm asking you!"

A slow flush gathered under the sweep of Mr. Clancy's jaw.

"We met this gunboat off Barranquila Inlet, an' she fired on us. We—"

"Without warning?"

"Well, I guess she was tryin' to fire across our bows. That's when she hit the steerin' engine."

"You didn't stop?"

"No, sir. Why—"

"Why not?"

"Well, because if we'd stopped she'd ha' confiscated us, an'—"

"You had empty holds, you cursed fool!"

"But there wasn't any empty beach, back there in the inlet," said Mr. Clancy slowly. "You don't understand, sir. Pretty nigh everything we'd unloaded was still right there—they was workin' it back into the brush with oxcarts."

"What business was that of yours?"

"Well, havin' delivered the stuff," said Mr. Clancy, still more slowly, the flush having mounted to his lip corners, "I thought—"

"You thought! Were you in command?"

"Not yet, sir. Not for about thirty more seconds. Then the second shell came an' burst over the for'ard welldeck an' killed the captain an' the mate, an' I took over."

"And carried on."

"Well, we're here, sir."

"I mean you carried on, you fool, instead of stopping and letting yourself be confiscated?"

"Yes, sir."

Evidently there was a direct ratio between the rise of the red in Mr. Clancy's cheeks and the slowness of his utterance. The former was now at his cheekbones—the top of them, and they were high cheekbones at that; and he was parting with monosyllables as though they were diamonds. Disregarding which phenomena, Mr. Parkins flashed a glance at the model of the *Albert George,* which had been so satisfactorily sunk. And paid for. And indemnified.

"Well?" he asked.

Mr. Clancy arose from his chair. So, with a remarkable change from repose to action, did the man with the gray eyes; he stood staring fixedly at a point in the second mate's stomach.

"I'll tell you what happened after that," said Mr. Clancy. "They sent another shell through our funnel, an' then by the grace of St. Peter their gun jammed, or they dropped their powder overboard or something; an' a fog came down in the evenin', so we got away. So bein' now in command—"

"Did I confirm that?"

"You did not! You were too busy

smokin' fifty-cent cigars, an' fillin' your hold, an' thinkin' up new ways to screw blood money out of sailors! But I was in command, anyway; an' I brought your old coffin home, layin' a carpet to cover the blood on the bridge wings an' loiterin' around with a busted steerin' gear until I'd hear of a storm big enough to account for the state we were in. So you can send your ship to the dockyard without all the quayside gossoons howlin' Judas! An' you can get what else you want from the log books. An' you can pay me the difference between my wages an' the captain's. Fifteen-pound-ten."

"Can I?" asked Mr. Parkins.

The flush had invaded Mr. Clancy's temples. Proportionately, he said nothing.

"I'm afraid not. By law—"

"The less you talk about the law, the better, mister. Fifteen—"

"Even had you been in command," said Mr. Parkins regretfully, "it would have been your duty to heed the lawful signal of a naval vessel. And you were not in command. The third mate has also a master's ticket. I might have preferred to appoint him. Indeed, I wish—"

Mr. Clancy, a vision of Mr. Wilks before his eyes, and a red drop curtain for a background, took a sudden step forward. Instantly the man with the gray eyes slipped forth from under his arm an automatic pistol, trained on that exact epigastric region at which he had been staring so fixedly; and a moment later the marine superintendent, struggling with a frock coat and a vast, antiquated revolver, followed suit. Between which armaments Mr. Parkins took a deep, refreshing pull at his cigar.

He laid it down.

"—I wish," he continued, "that I had. You've involved me in possibly serious difficulties. You've got the ship damaged, you're ten days overdue and you're insubordinate and insolent."

"Don't twitch, buddy," said the man with the gray eyes pleasantly. "Don't twitch. Or maybe I might."

Mr. Clancy's flush had receded. All of a sudden he was deathly pale.

"I fear I must discharge you," said Mr. Parkins, feeling in his breast pocket.

Smiling a little as he pulled out a fat wallet, he looked up into Mr. Clancy's face for the familiar evidences of dismay; none knew better than Mr. Parkins how hard times were, and how many extra masters had given up job hunting for the less arduous work of stevedores. But there was no look of dismay about the face of Mr. Clancy. There was, indeed, no expression on it at all. The man seemed frozen; yet in such a manner as to make Mr. Parkins cock a hasty eye at the revolvers to each side of him. He had dealt with dissatisfied gun runners before, but somehow this one seemed— No, of course not different. Pish!

He fumbled in the wallet.

"However, you seem to have done your best. You'll collect your regular second mate's pay from the office, and as a bonus—here!"

And he flung carelessly on the table—one fluttered to the floor and lay across the toe of Mr. Clancy's boot—five one-pound notes.

THERE was a silence.

Unmoving—until suddenly a motor horn in the street outside awoke their owner from his reverie—the eyes of the second mate blazed into those of the shipowner; then they slowly dropped to the crumpled bits of paper on the desk. They are ignoble looking documents, those one-pound notes; they looked singularly so, spread as they had been flung—and of course there was one on the floor; Mr. Clancy looked at it, and removed his shoe from contact. He considered himself to be of the blood of kings; and, as he raised his head again, he rather looked the part.

The gray eyed man, who was undoubtedly a gunman, observing him, shifted the butt of his automatic slightly, and the marine superintendent changed his gun from right hand to left.

Mr. Clancy looked from one to the other of them, and then at Mr. Parkins, opened his mouth to speak, closed it, and went to the door. His hat—that rather shabby bowler—was beside the ducal chair where he had placed it. Oblivious of its existence, he opened the

door and passed into the outer office.

A man was sitting there—a small, swarthy man who at sight of him arose in haste, bowed and attempted to detain him. Still dazed, Mr. Clancy brushed him aside and went down the dusty stairs leading away forever from the offices of Halsey, Wall, Parkins & Wilberforce, Ltd.

Five pounds! After what he'd done! Thrown to him like a bone to a dog by a trainer with a gun!

Lord Street's shops, glittering with plate glass and brass trimmings, flitted by him in a mist. Somebody shoved violets under his nose; he bumped into a hurrying Englishman who said, "Dammit, sir— . . ." But that fat swine sitting there throwing money at him. Throwing it—so he'd have had to stoop to pick it up—a third of what he'd earned, those long watches. Throwing it at him and saying, "Here!" like you'd say to a dog, "Here, Towser, here!"

Something was pulling at his coattails.

He stopped abruptly, then struck at whatever it was, and turned. It was the little swarthy man of the outer office, hatless like himself, horribly out of breath, bathed in perspiration and now nursing one wrist in the other hand, as he spoke to Clancy.

"Excuse—pliz—spik to you—"

The little man gulped, and before the gaze of Mr. Clancy made protesting motions while he gathered his breath. He went on—

"Señor Clancy—excuse. Permit introduce—" he gulped again— "myself—consul for republic of San Pablo—Jesus-Maria Martinez."

Mr. Clancy sneered.

"Oh, yeah? Consul for San Pablo, are you? Well—"

"Excuse — thousan' pardons — cablegram instructions. Seek you your ship —office—everywhere. Kindly listen one moment."

Gasping frightfully, he abandoned the wrist Mr. Clancy had struck to run a trembling brown finger around under his wilted collar.

"Compliments of the *presidente* of the Republica de San Pablo," said Señor Martinez, "an' how you like to be admiral?"

EIGHT o'clock that same evening, in the waist of the *Joan Shaw.*

From overhead a cargo light slung from a boom shone on the *Joan's* crew, mustered in various attitudes about the deck, awaiting further remarks from their acting captain, who had already been talking for some time. He was standing, arms folded and new bowler hat on the back of his head, in the exact center of No. 3 hatch. It was notable that while Señor Jesus-Maria Martinez, his companion since eleven that morning, was now seated on the starboard bollard mentally disheveled to the point of playing love songs on an imaginary guitar, Mr. Clancy stood firmly on his feet and spoke as firmly as he stood. A sight which must have impressed Señor Martinez (had he been able to see for the hair which had fallen over his eyes) still more with the abilities of the admiral-elect.

"Well? Any questions?"

"How do we know it ain't a trick?" came a voice from the shadows. "To get us back an' shoot us for that last job, I mean?"

"Because the rebels we ran those guns for is the government now, you damn fool," said Mr. Clancy. "This guy here told me so, an' anyhow I looked it up in the papers. I tell you they admired the way we handled that gunboat, an' that's why—"

"How do we know they won't be out again by the time we get there?"

"How d'you know I'm not goin' to step down off this hatch an' put two heads on you in a minute? Listen. There's no time to waste. The *Santa Lucia* sails at midnight; an' me, I'm goin' to be on her. Get that. I've been talkin' with this spiggoty all day, an' if you think I'm goin' all over what we said again for you bunch of teak-skulled Liverpool Irish pier-jumpers, you're wrong. You've sailed with me for a trip, an' one or two of you haven't made your eyeballs click when I gave you an order; so you ought to know me. If you don't, or if you think I'm damn fool enough not to know a good thing when I see it, to hell with you.

"I'm goin'; an' the next time you're sweatin' around San Pablo in a crate

like this, gettin' shelled so old Parkins can keep floosies, you can remember I'm the guy in gold braid that's givin' the orders to fire. Now then, take your pick."

"Do we all get gold braid?" asked a voice that on previous occasions had pleaded guilty to four counts of robbery with violence.

"You don't. You'll be cook same as ever, only you'll have natives to do the work, an' Lord help you if you don't make 'em turn out better grub than you do."

The crew guffawed. Mr. Clancy shifted his bowler hat satanically over one eye.

"I'll say it again, men! I'm goin' to be admiral. If the bosun's got brains, he'll be vice-admiral; hundred a month an' found. I forget what the rest get in pesos, but it's more than you're gettin' now, an' you wear white gloves while you earn it. You'll be vice-admiral too, Hansen; you've been in the navy."

"So've most of us," objected the carpenter.

"Yeah," said Mr. Clancy darkly, "and out of it. Well, there's no more room for flag officers, so you can either be captains or stay home. An' I want a quick answer."

"What about this war?"

"I've told you. We got two warships; Redondo's only got one—an' I guess it can't hit anything. Whereas we can. If there is a war, which ain't certain, prob'ly the United States'd send a Marine down an' stop it. Meanwhile, the liquor's cheap, the women are good lookin' an' the enlisted men do the work. Comin'?"

"Can we talk it over?"

Under the cargo light Mr. Clancy peered at the wristwatch which had stopped when he hit the waiter in the Bear's Paw at 4:46.

"I'm gonna pack my gear," he said deliberately, "so you can have ten minutes. No more."

Stepping from the hatch, he seized the softly singing Señor Martinez by the arm.

"Come an' have a drink, Mary," he said; and as he propelled him down the alleyway he whispered fiercely, "Wake up, you silly fool, you! We've got 'em! We've got 'em!"

To which Señor Martinez's only reply was a mixture of "Goo-roo!" and the sound of Niagara—a poor acknowledgment of a remarkably accurate prediction.

For when, in point of fact, the *Santa Lucia* passed Daunt Rock early next morning, two vice-admirals and one admiral were snoring on her smoking room settees; while from her forecastle head no less than fifteen captains bayed at the waning moon.

II

THEY seemed to have a habit of baying, those captains; like dogs released from chain and kennel and set to the pursuit of strange new game. Clad in various raiment from shoregoing blues to red sweaters, yet entitled by indisputable tickets to travel first class, they bayed at the half dozen passengers who came to dinner in evening dress; at one banana broker, who displayed a .25 caliber revolver, they threw plates, cruet stands, and even epergnes until he decided to eat in the sick bay; and when the captain came down to protest they bayed at him.

It was unfortunate for the captain that he should previously have told Mr. Michael Clancy that the Irish kings were all rot; for now the admiral arose and, instead of silencing his subordinates, stalked off to smoke a pipe with the second mate. So that the commander of the *Santa Lucia* retired to his cabin defeated; and the captains sang songs under his window.

"Wild bunch you've got there," said the second mate.

Mr. Clancy settled himself comfortably where he could both have his feet on the washstand and see the photograph of the second mate's best girl. He liked his little comforts.

"M'yes. I'm lettin' 'em have their fun now, but they'll settle down when we get there. I've settled 'em down before. What are we doin' today?"

"About eighteen."

"Ought to be in by tomorrow then?"

"Off Point Marco."

"Oh, they're sendin' a cutter out for

us—you know; admiral's flag in the stern an' all that."

"No kiddin'?"

"Sure. You better get your big fenders out."

The second mate giggled.

"You're a queer duck, Clancy."

"Yeah?"

"Sure. You look like a regular hard guy, an' you're gettin' the biggest kick out of playin' sailor—"

"You think so?"

"Sure! Gosh, you've been in the tropics before—you told me so; bananas an' red pepper, an' drinks like compass fluid, an' lots of crawly little friends in your bunk with you at night. An' then you get paid in paper money worth fourpence a bushel, an' shot if you raise a kick."

"An' you figure," said Mr. Clancy, regarding the ceiling, "that I'm goin' into all that just for the fun of bein' called admiral?"

"Certainly you—"

The admiral's feet met the deck with a bump.

"Take a look at me, Erskine," he demanded.

Mr. Erskine complied.

"Well, gosh, you don't wanna get sore just be—"

"I'm not sore," said Mr. Clancy. "I'd just like to put the answer in a sealed envelop, so that somebody'll know I knew what I was doin' before I set out to do it."

"Hey, wait a minute. Say that again."

"Never mind that. You look like a good guy, Erskine—an' you're a Scotsman. You might understand. Now listen. There's a swine in Liverpool called Parkins."

"I've heard of him."

"You haven't heard this. I worked for him."

"Runnin'—?"

"That's somethin' I'm bound not to talk about. I worked for him. But for me, he'd be a ship shy this minute—an' glad of it, as I found out, the fat slug; but ne'er mind. I brought her home—me an' Wilks; an' you said you knew Wilks."

"Yes," said the second mate scornfully. "He's not with this gang, I see."

"He's at home havin' a baby or something," said the admiral. "But listen: I brought her home, an' when I got her home d'you know what Parkins did?"

"No."

"He threw five pounds at me," snarled Mr. Clancy, "an' said, 'Here!' "

Pipe suspended in one hand, smoke issuing slowly from a mouth half open, Mr. Erskine stared.

"Well?" he inquired after a moment.

"I say he threw five pounds at me and said, 'Here!' "

"Sure. Well," said the second mate slowly, "it wasn't much, that's true. But—"

"He *threw* it. He said, 'Here!' "

"Oh, I see," said Mr. Erskine with complete incomprehension. "Oh, yes. That's right too."

"So now you can write your own ticket," said Mr. Clancy, nursing his knee as if it had been revenge made flesh. "I don't want gold braid an' twenty-one gun salutes. You know what I want, an' what I'm goin' to have; an' when it comes to pass you'll know the why an' wherefore. Irish kings may be all rot, like your Old Man says—gosh, you ought to seen my staff razz him about that in the saloon!—but good or bad, there's their blood in me. Nobody can throw me five pounds or say, 'Here!' an' get no answer."

"You mean you're shippin' admiral to San Pablo so's to get revenge on old Parkins?"

Mr. Clancy nodded.

"Yes, an' now," he said, relaxing his diabolical smile and putting his feet once more upon the washstand, "let's talk about—"

And they talked, technically and with many a pleasing discovery of mutual friends, until eight bells, when Erskine went on watch, and the admiral, lungs pleasantly cured by smoke and stomach peacefully preserved in alcohol, decided to turn in.

It was after the last good night had been said that Erskine had his brilliant idea. As he put on his collar, and as Mr. Clancy opened the door to go, the puzzled expression he had worn most of the evening relaxed, and a blissful look of understanding irradiated his features.

"I know what you're figurin' to do!" cried Mr. Erskine. "Parkins'll run more guns to San Pablo, an' you'll capture a ship on him!"

Mr. Clancy's features slipped back into the Mephistophelian, this time in an expression of contempt. Raising one nostril at the delighted second mate, he snorted.

"Ah, you damn fool," said Mr. Clancy disgustedly.

The door slammed.

III

AS A San Pablonian poet has said—subordinating astromony and geography, it is true, perhaps a little to patriotism—there can be no doubt that the earth is the center of the universe; that San Pablo is the center of the earth; that the new capitol—not the present one, but the edifice which was destroyed by shellfire in 1908—is the navel of San Pablo; and that the core of San Pablo is the president (Ramon Ramirez—Sept. 1908-Oct. 1908).

The poet, having been unfortunately executed by President Ramirez's successor, no longer remains as a glory of his country; but his song remains, eternally true in the sense that San Pablo is, if not the center, at least the type of that delectable land seven days to the south of New York. There the sun shines everlastingly through the clouds of dust kicked up from the mud of the rainy season; there the trees lining the public thoroughfares can not be prevented from bursting into fruit which will feed a man whether he works or not; and there even meat, in the form of exceedingly sharp spined pigs, offers itself gratis to the passerby.

The very shrubs, lolling opulently from their stems, have thick, lush leaves which, by sheer force of fecundity, provide the poorest with umbrellas or parasols according to the season. Year in, year out, the joyous San Pablonian takes and rejoices in what nature gives; he picks a fruit, takes a cut at a pig and lies under a bush.

Nor is he without intellectual advantages. When the sun shines he is at liberty to reflect—and does reflect, looking out from his shelter—that the sun is shining; when it rains, that it is raining; and when God sends both together, he may turn from this more complicated situation to the thought of how blessed it is to be a native in a country exploited exclusively by foreigners. Foreigners who drill oil-wells, far away in the bad countries; foreigners who grow tobacco; foreigners who send God's free bananas to be bought by people in the North; foreigners who pay all the taxes and supply rifles and ammunition when the heart craves relief from the monotony of perfection.

After which, the thinker casts from him his latest banana skin, his ultimate maize husk and shred of tobacco, thanks God and goes to sleep.

Over his slumbers watches an army* of three hundred forty-seven officers and men; a navy of one gunboat, one torpedoboat destroyer with a personnel of three thousand seven hundred and forty-nine**; and police to the number of seventy-six.*** To which potent defenders had been added, this fifteenth day of June, potent reenforcements, to the number of one admiral, two vice-admirals, and fifteen captains of the navy, as hereinbefore mentioned.

Whereof the vice-admirals and the captains were already aboard their vessels, the *Santa Marta* and the *Santa Elisa*, and halfway into their uniforms; while the admiral, in a frayed duck suit with no more concession to the seafaring than highly polished brass buttons, was holding audience with the core of the universe, the president.

"Hello," his Excellency was saying with cordiality, "how in hell are you? Have a drink."

Accepting a sample of the contents of a vast thermos jug placed conveniently at his Excellency's right hand, Mr. Clancy raised his glass and over its edge stared at his new employer, a remarkable and welcome contrast to the old. Like Mr. Parkins, the president of San Pablo was inclined to run to flesh; but there—even without researches into the qualities of embonpoint—the resem-

*Figures as of 1924

**Including coast-defense battery, shipyard workers and pensioners of the war of 1928.

***Excluding *rurales*.

blance ended with an almost audible click. Able and unscrupulous conspirator though he had been, statesman though he was—a most iniquitous treaty with Paraguay lay at that moment on the desk before him—there was nothing in the least ominous, or even impressive, about Señor Pedro Bo.

Round faced, disheveled, smiling and bright of eye, the core of the universe reminded one somewhat of a suntanned robin in a perpetual Spring. Surrounded by aides in frock coats, served (he had rung for cigars) by flunkeys in blue breeches, with gold palm trees growing up the fronts of their scarlet coats, his Excellency was attired in a duck suit more disreputable than Mr. Clancy's own. He sat with one leg over the arm of his chair, the attached foot waving loose-bootedly in the circumambient atmosphere, and spoke perfect English with the accent of the London East End.

"I'm there six years in exile—hiding even from the English police," he informed Mr. Clancy genially, "so I live in Poplar. Horrid place; but since I learn English like a native, I think worthwhile, eh? How are you?"

"I'm fine," said Mr. Clancy. He hesitated a moment, regarded his Excellency's beam of amiability and chanced politeness. "How are you, President?"

A cloud passed over Señor Bo's smile.

"I'm not very well," said he, touching a hand to his brow. "I got an inferiority complex."

"A—?"

"You know. When somebody got you fooled he's better than you are—stronger, better lookin'—you know."

"Never had it," said the admiral decisively.

"You're ruddy lucky. But you," said his Excellency, leaning forward with extended finger, "you cure it for me. So soon as what I hear what you do to them swine as wouldn't load them rifles that day, I says, 'Gawblime, if this revolution go over, I get that mugger for admiral.'"

"I warned 'em before I hit 'em," said Mr. Clancy with a trace of discomfort, "but they wouldn't work, an' with that cruiser floatin' around—"

"I know—I know. I shoot 'em afterwards, eight of 'em. But I say to myself, 'If that man can fight eight men with knives and pistols, an' lay 'em kickin' with his fists only, what the hell would he do to Redondo?' So the day after I'm inaugurate, I wire our consul get you and as many of your men as possible—and here you are. Gawblime, I'm glad to see you! Here's mud in your eye!"

Snorting into his drink with the sudden memory of a vital matter forgotten, the president rang a bell, hissed at the answering valet in Spanish and lay back in his chair.

"Good job for you I got this job," he beamed. "The old president would've raised hell for you when you got home."

"He didn't know for sure what ship we were."

"Certainly he did, foolish one! I know you call the boat *Peter James* when you come here, and paint her funnels blue, but what the hell! You disguise her just the same when you bring him rifles for his revolution. He tell me this while we chat just before he is execute. Nice feller. You don't speak Spanish, eh?"

"Not much."

"'*Querida*' an' all that only, eh? Well, I fix a teacher for you. Waterfront character—very bad man. Knows all the words. By the way, you must not call sailors a pig. Call them——," said his Excellency cheerfully, giving an English translation which made Mr. Clancy's hair shift slightly on his scalp, "but not pigs. I dunno why. They don't like it. That's how our last admiral got killed—his boat's crew take him ashore an' stab him five times an' shoot him in the back an' beat his head against some rocks an' hold him under water until he got drownded. Nice feller."

He rang the bell again. At the moment he touched the button the door opened and the flunkey appeared. Behind him, passing between the two gorgeous sentries at the doorway, appeared various humble men with their arms full of bundles.

The president leaped delightedly from his chair.

"Aha!" he cried, tapping Mr. Clancy vigorously on the left shoulder. "And now here comes your uniform. Take 'em off. We put 'em on."

MR. CLANCY rose uncertainly to his feet. From one of the bundles in the arms of a humble man—a bundle of brown paper pinned just as had been the bundles of pressed clothes returned from tailors' shops in 14th Street, New York—there protruded a vast and dangling gold epaulet. From another hung, limp, yet gorgeous, the legs of a pair of pants, decorated as to the seams with one two-inch band of bullion, flanked by two parallel one-inch stripes of red. The third tailor, depositing on the presidential desk a bundle at once torn open by his Excellency with cries of admiration, proved to have been carrying a cocked hat, at which the future wearer gazed horror stricken. From bow to stern it was about three feet long, in shape resembling a racing yacht, keel upward; it bore bullion to an extent unthought of in the admiral's wildest dreams; and from forward aft it was draped with an ostrich plume dyed crimson.

"What the hell you waitin' for?" demanded Señor Bo, rubbing his hands in ecstasy. "Take 'em off; blast it! Put 'em on!"

"What, here?"

"Certainly, here! The consul send me your size just about, but these fellers make 'em fit you exact. Like the paper on the wall. Ha-ha! Alterations free. I show that mugger Moreno who got the best admiral. Take 'em off!"

Suppressing an inclination to roll his eyes, Mr. Clancy undid the top button of his jacket. With enthusiasm and a violent jerk at the lapels, President Bo undid the rest, and reached vigorous hands toward the admiral's suspenders.

"Say!" said Mr. Clancy; and his eye, now rolling uncontrollably, chanced to rest on the waiting bushelmen.

"Aha, quite so! You are modest," said the president. "*Vamos!* And now—"

"Say," said the admiral temporizingly, "who is this feller Moreno you just mentioned? Seems to me I heard of him."

The president seated himself and lighted a fresh cigar. Bowing to the inevitable, Mr. Clancy proceeded to disrobe.

"Very good," said President Bo gravely. "You want to know the situation quick, yet you don't talk politics in front of strangers. Very good. I raise your pay one thousand pesos a year for that. How those trousers fit around the waist?"

"Pretty good."

"Bit baggy in the seat, though. We fix that. I work for a tailor one time I'm in exile—Paris, that was. Yes. Well, this Moreno, he's president of Redondo. He's a——" observed President Bo, ending after some considerable time with the words, "and I don't like him. He give me this damn inferiority complex. How's the tunic?"

Mr. Clancy gave a stifled moan.

"Do I have to wear these tails?"

"Sure. All admirals do. They got gold on 'em."

"They sure have," said the ex-second mate of the *Joan Shaw*. "It'll be like sittin' on the Federal Reserve Bank. An' how the hell do I bend my upper half?"

"You don't bend. You stand up straight, even when you sit down. See, when you sit down, you spread your tails like this an' hitch your sword up across your kidneys. Put on the hat."

Already on his feet for the lesson in deportment, Señor Bo clasped his hands before the coruscating form of his creation.

"Gawblime!" he said reverently. "You'll make Pedro de los Angeles look sick!"

"Who's he?"

"He's Moreno's admiral," said his Excellency; "and he gave me the other half of my inferiority complex. It makes me thirsty to talk about them muggers. Sit down an' have a drink."

Erect from the waist up, and moving with an audible creak from there to his boots, Mr. Clancy took the chair in which he had formerly lounged.

"Spread your tails!" shrieked the president. "Spread your ruddy tails, can't you? That's right. Now I tell you. I'm a better president than Moreno. I got a bigger country—I got fifty more square miles than he got. But he's a big feller—see? He's got a big nose an' iron gray hair, blast him, an' he looks like a president. I don't. I'm fat. Also he don't ever smile, an' I can't help it. So he get his pitcher in the papers an' I don't. Last time I was president—"

"You been in before?"

"Sure. I didn't get shot because when they have the revolution and arrest me, I got an aide that shin over the prison wall an' give the captain ten thousand pesos and stab four guards an' get me out. They shoot him for that. Nice feller. You hear about that war in 1928?"

"Er—"

"This Moreno got an admiral," said Señor Bo, his usually sunny face contorted with rage, "a nasty sneak, big an' tall like him—all over gold lace. I got a little nice fat admiral like me—don't care what he's dressed in; likes his food, likes a good cigar, tell a good story, you know. Well, one day while the battleships are at the dock, an' everybody's ashore for lunch—see their wives, do some shopping, you know—this mugger Moreno declare war about some lousy customs, an' by the time I get the telegram his dirty sneakin' admiral's come past the coast batteries that was takin' the siesta, you know, an' put prize crews on my ships! What you think of that for a dirty trick?"

From the admiral's chest, that deeper portion of it which was covered by the arms of San Pablo worked out in gold and silver thread, came a noise resembling a bass death rattle.

"What you think, eh?" demanded the president again, hammering his desk for emphasis. "Lousy?"

Mr. Clancy returned to earth.

"You mean his comin' while the navy was at lunch an' the coast batteries takin' a nap an'—"

"Yes!"

The admiral swallowed something. Apparently something square or at least triangular.

"Not fair," he articulated faintly; and swallowed again. "You want me to pay 'em back?"

A knock sounded at the door, and a secretary entered. In polite Spanish, with many bows, he informed his Excellency of something, to which his Excellency replied with impatience. The secretary withdrew.

"It's those damn delegates," said Señor Bo, leafing over the papers which lay before him, "to sign this lousy treaty. Now, I tell you, Señor Almirante. You go down an' kick the stuffs out of those crews—that take you two weeks, perhaps; maybe three. Then I declare war on Redondo, an' you go kick the stuffs out of their navy. Then we sign peace right here in my capital, an' I make Moreno ride in the second carriage like he done me, an' I put on my top hat an' I get my pictures in the papers. You got any medals?"

"I had a Victory medal," said Mr. Clancy dazedly, "for bein' second loot in a sub-chaser durin' the war; only I passed it out by mistake for a half dollar in Hobok—"

"I send you down a dozen," said the president, making a note, "an' then everybody see I got a better admiral than Moreno got, too. An' then I don't have my inferiority complex no more. To hell with it."

The secretary appeared once more in the doorway.

"Tell 'em to come in," said his Excellency; and repeated the order in Spanish. He held out his hand to Mr. Clancy. "*Hasta luego, Señor Almirante.* The tailors come fix you up aboard. Send your commission down too—ruddy nuisance. See you again soon. Pip-pip!"

Twenty minutes later there appeared in a certain café on the main street a figure so gorgeous that, brushing aside all waiters, the proprietor rushed forward to serve the man himself. He appeared, despite a general look about the eyes that suggested he was dead, and had been so a long time, to be a high officer of the San Pablonian navy—probably that admiral whose arrival and audience with the president had been announced. Yet he spoke no Spanish.

"Drink!" he said—a word explained by the gesture accompanying it; and then sounds like, "Lots of it! Strong drink!"

HE EMPTIED, to be something less than exact, four tumblers filled with *pruna,* that San Pablonian brandy which is guaranteed to make mice chase cats; but which seemed to affect him not at all, save insofar as his eyes, by the time he reached the fleet, had lost their dazed expression and resumed the ominously sardonic look latterly habitual to

them. This expression, which had nothing to do with that strangely diabolic glitter before which the domestically minded Mr. Wilks had quailed, had settled into the orbs of Mr. Clancy during his interview with Halsey, Wall, Parkins & Wilberforce, Limited; and there was that about the San Pablonian navy, as it lay higgledy-piggledy at the pier, which justified a continuance.

Higgledy-piggledy may seem a strong term wherewith to characterize the mooring of two ships, a gig and a craft combining the worst features of a raft and a mud scow; but higgledy-piggledy the San Pablonian navy was, and the scow-raft was a munitions barge to you. From under a red flag that seemed by its stains to have done double duty as a tablecloth, with the assistance of five or six victims of sleeping sickness and a cargo-boom rigged from the *Santa Elisa's* military foremast, the flatboat was currently loading shells; whereof one, as the admiral set foot on the pier, slipped from its sling and fell with a resounding crash to the deck plates.

Mr. Clancy paused; and in the soft air of evening, by the light of the sinking sun, and to the accompaniment of distant Northumbrian cursing from aboard the *Santa Elisa,* he surveyed his new command.

Evidently the *Santa Marta* would be his flagship. He looked at her with proportionate interest. He had already seen all he wanted to see—though less than he was destined to—of the *Santa Elisa,* which was, to be brutally frank, nothing more than a reorganized paddlewheel excursion boat.

For all her military mast (part of the salvaged aerial of the radio station dynamited during the 1929 rebellion) and the Gatling gun which peered over her bows, she was obviously a good old soul, meaning no harm to anybody, and homesick for peanut vendors and itinerant musicians with guitars.

Beside her the *Santa Marta,* built in 1894 and deliberately designed to be a gunboat, seemed a positive monument to Bellona. She had fighting tops armed with Nordenfelts; she had gun turrets—no fewer than four—built into her rusty white side and bulging therefrom like bay windows; and under tarpaulins fore and aft she appeared to carry bow-and-stern chasers (the ancient terms flashed into Mr. Clancy's mind and refused to leave when requested) of really considerable size. Had it not been for the crew's underwear, drying on a funnel-stay, she would have looked positively menacing.

Even as it was, the *Santa Elisa* seemed to lean on her as upon a big and protective sister; a semblance partly due to a constitutional list and partly to the fact that the *Santa Elisa's* bow lines, in the absence of bollards on the port side of the pier, were made fast to, with, in and among the *Santa Marta's* on the starboard side. The effect was that of the web of an intoxicated spider; from the midst of which Vice-Admiral Hutchins, formerly boatswain of the steamship *Joan Shaw,* now emerged accompanied by four San Pablonian sailors.

Apparently at some hour of the day he had been in uniform; he still wore trousers, from which the tail of his shirt had emancipated itself; and a cocked hat, white plumed, and therefore presumably his, was lying on the pier. Indeed, seeing his superior officer, he picked up this confection and put it on for saluting purposes. The four enlisted men, retiring to the bollards, lighted cigarets and chatted wearily with the workers on the munition barge, now loading powder.

"Listen, Clancy—"

"'What did you say?"

The vice-admiral looked at his superior and stiffened himself. He saluted again, and Mr. Clancy acknowledged it.

"I beg to report, sir," said Mr. Hutchins, fumbling in a mind distressed for some half forgotten formula, "that—er—oh, that there's nothin' to be done with this damn layout, an' that I'm goin' home. I've had about two hundred men, in relays of four or five at a time, workin' on them damn lines all day, an' we've only managed to shift one! It's no good. I'm goin' home!"

"You're what?"

Mr. Hutchins spun on his heel and pointed dramatically.

"Look at it!" he cried in a high, strained voice. "She's *moored* on a *foul* hawse, and when I got what they call their bosun an' tried to tell him to rig a pendant, he thought I wanted some-

thin' he was wearin' round his neck. They got their port anchor chain twisted around the ram before it comes ashore, an' where it wasn't long enough to reach the dock they've pieced it out with rope tied in granny knots. I dunno what they done with their starboard cable. Been playin' cat's cradle with it, the way it looks.

An' now since they've busted off their starboard stern bitts, they got the stern lines hitched around three stanchions of the taffrail. An' if you talk to 'em they don't understand; an' if you knock 'em down they gang you—you ought to see my uniform coat, an' they scratched me with their nails so I'll prob'ly get hydrophobia, an' it's no damn good, sir, an' I'm goin' home."

"Says you," observed Mr. Clancy pleasantly. "Anybody else say it?"

"They all say it! Robinson—"

"Oh, Robinson. Captain Robinson says it, does he?"

The ex-boatswain trotted breathlessly by the side of an admiral now trotting vigorously toward the gangway.

"Not Robinson more'n anybody else, Clancy—"

"What did you call me?"

"—*sir*, but they're all sayin' it."

"All sayin' what?"

Close to the side of his flagship, and within easy earshot of her decks, the admiral came to a full stop and fixed his most Mephistophelian look on his inferior. There was a silence, broken only by the screaming of a derisive seagull, and a hoarse voice from above—

"Hey, boys, here he is!"

"All sayin' what?" demanded the admiral again. "An' who's sayin' it?"

"Why, that," said the boatswain, ignoring the latter part of the question and rolling an appealing eye at the faces which now lined the gunboat's rail, "we're gonna get paid in paper money—"

"What do you use in dear old England?" demanded the admiral. "Platinum?"

"It's worth somethin', anyhow," came a voice from above.

Captain Robinson, once a humble third engineer, was speaking. And there was that in his tone which showed he feared not to speak with admirals. In fact he did not. He had in his time spoken to a judge. Mr. Clancy looked up at him.

"Oh, you're there, are you?" he asked softly; and with rapid step came aboard.

He was not received by sideboys; there was no guard—save for one sentry on the poop-deck, who marched moodily to and fro with his rifle at the shoulder, eating a banana from the other hand. There was no ruffle of drums or hoisting of the pennant. He arrived escorted by one vice-admiral, who had turned pale under his tan, and was received by fifteen captains in various stages of undress. Of these, Captain Robinson was incomparably the brawniest; and was wearing, instead of the conventional sword, a twenty-four-inch wrench.

"Any of the rest of you in on this?" demanded the admiral.

There was a silence. In it, Mr. Clancy divested himself of sword belt, tunic and cocked hat and, presenting these vanities to the boatswain, stood forth in his shirtsleeves.

"They're all in on it!" shouted Robinson, shouldering forward. "We're all goin' home! We been over this ship an' the other one, an' we been makin' inquiries about the pay, an' we ain't gonna get blown to hell when the boilers burst, or the guns go off backwards, not for no five shillin's a month. Believe me, if you could see the main steampipe alone—"

"I wouldn't believe you if you said you was a liar," observed the admiral slowly. "Svenson. You're gunner. What's wrong with the armament?"

A BLOND Minnesota Swede stepped forward.

"Vell, it ain'd so much dere's anyding wrong with it," he said dubiously, "only it's a bit olt, you know. Ant I don't dink dey come by der pig guns honest. No, sir, I dink dey steal dem guns. I dink dey got dat bow gun, by Good, I dink day steel it off der Civil Var memorial in Norvalk, Connecticut, vere I used to vork, an' I'll bet you go uptown an' you find der Union soldier set up for a monument of Bolivar. Unless dey melt him up for cannonballs —only vat cannonballs I seen ain't seem to be of metal. Dey're kind of moldy."

"They're muzzle-loaders?"

"Dey used to have breech-loaders, same's dey got in der turrets," said Captain Svenson mildly, "only dey say dey vouldn't vork no more, so dey sell 'em for junk. I guess most likely dey drop dings in der breech mechanism. Brobably banana skins. Dot sentry on der quarterdeck, now—tvice I go up dere, an' both times I slip on to my—"

He was shouldered aside.

"You was talkin' to me," said Captain Robinson. "Yeah, an' what's more, you took your coat off. I said we was fed up with this an' goin' home. Did you have anythin' to say about that, Admiral dear?"

"Smack!" said Mr. Clancy with his right fist; he took Mr. Robinson's wrench, tossed it overboard and stood waiting.

He was not compelled to wait very long.

Indeed, it would have been considerably better for the captain had he for the moment controlled himself, reflected a little; let the two teeth which he now spat out serve as a warning, rather than as a stimulus to immediate action. A moment's thought would have told him that an admiral who could hit like a mule, without flickering his eyes or moving his feet in the slightest, was no man to rush, head down and fists going blindly; an idea which Mr. Clancy now endeavored to implant with his left hand knuckles. Stricken behind the ear, Mr. Robinson lost for the moment his directive faculties, but absorbed wisdom. Having butted his head into the bulwarks and fallen to his knees, he arose with the timely aid of a stanchion. He assumed an expression of considerable annoyance and removed his shirt.

"Yeah?" he inquired; and advanced upon his superior officer in the second, or cagey manner.

Instead of having his head down, he now merely slanted his forehead forward, keeping his rather gory chin in the hollow of his shoulder. His left hand, in whose palm he chanced to be concealing a two-inch hexagon nut, he held exaggeratedly before him; his right he moved delicately and menacingly across the hirsute expanse of his chest.

Obviously, if Mr. Clancy wanted classy, Soldier's Field, Madison Square Garden fighting, Mr. Robinson was the boy to give him what he wanted, and then some. But apparently the admiral was changeable, fickle, not to be pleased. For no sooner had his subordinate taken up this decorative fighting pose than he rushed in, making no attempt to punch and indeed taking two lulus on the eye and the right cheek respectively; picked Mr. Robinson up by the waist, whirled him around, slammed him down violently on the deck and fell on him.

The hexagon nut fell clatteringly from the engineer's hand; his eyes, seemingly jarred out of their orbits by the impact of his head on the planking, crossed in his head; he crowed harshly, pulled up his legs, seized Mr. Clancy's ears one in each hand, and tried to bite his nose off. Which, effective as it might have been if it had succeeded, was the thing which definitely lowered the class of the ensuing battle.

From now on it was in no sense a romantic sort of combat, as practised by Sirs Galahad and Launfal; it was more in the nature of an argument between gorillas; and not nice woodsy gorillas; say, gorillas who had spent their formative years in a low grade city zoo. No monkey living under God's good, clean sky, for instance, would have had it occur to him to half rise, taking a nasty uppercut in so doing, for the express purpose of doubling his leg and falling with the resultant knee in his adversary's stomach; yet this is precisely what Mr. Clancy did. Nor does the usual chimpanzee, baboon, orang-utan or lemur go in for two-handed gouging, to which Mr. Robinson devoted all the time he could spare from defensive measures.

He had lost all his accumulated supplies of air when Mr. Clancy performed the knee trick; and it seemed to him that if the admiral persisted in squeezing his throat so that he could not inhale more, he would be seriously inconvenienced. This was why he first tried the gouging and then butted his superior so savagely with his head. Also why, when Mr. Clancy loosened his grip for the infinitesimal fraction of a second, Mr. Robinson rolled so vengefully over on him and fastened his own grip about the underdog's windpipe.

Judging by his expression, rendered the more intent by the streaks of blood radiating from his excessively damaged nose, the engineer wished, in all loving kindness, to teach the flag officer that strangling was no joke. Obviously, he hoped that Mr. Clancy would never do such a thing again.

Nor did he; though the lesson did not proceed to its intended termination. Placing his thumbs on Mr. Robinson's eyeballs, and securing them there by a finger grip in Mr. Robinson's hair, Mr. Clancy pushed. The engineer shook his head—violently; first from side to side, then up and down. Mr. Clancy, from being scarlet in the face, turned blue; then purple; but still he pushed; until finally the engineer threw his head back; when, with the rapidity peculiar to himself and the cobra de capello, he withdrew his right hand, balled it into a fist, struck and rolled on his side. He rolled over several times; came to his feet to find Mr. Robinson rising likewise; staggered over to him and smote him grievously about one-half inch to the left of the point of the jaw.

"One!" said Captain McIlwraith sententiously. "Two! Three! Four! Fi—!"

"Shut up," said the admiral. "This is no boxin' match. Get up, Robinson. I haven't started yet."

Mr. Robinson made no move. The admiral eyed him. He was lying, unlike most gentlemen who take rests after fights, rather upon his stomach than upon his back; and what there was visible of his face suggested—barring the bloodstains — less unconsciousness following a violent accident than innocent slumber, complicated by a slight smile. Yet Captain Robinson was not malingering; indeed, when he awoke three hours later, it was some time before he could be convinced that he was not back in his eleventh year and the proud owner of a medal for knowing all his catechism by Easter Sunday.

"Bosun," said Mr. Clancy. "I mean admiral. Vice-Admiral Hutchins!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Help me on with my coat. And then," said the commander of the San Pablonian navy, "throw this son—I mean show this gentleman to his quarters. He's under arrest. Make it snappy and, of course, take his sword."

"Aye, aye—"

"He ain't got one," said a voice from the circle of officers. "He went ashore this afternoon an' pawned it. Seventy pesos."

The admiral said nothing.

HE PUT on his cocked hat; he put on his gold embroidered tunic; the vice-admiral, breathing heavily, buttoned it and strapped around Mr. Clancy's waist the swordbelt which seemed to endow the admiral with a long and conspicuously nickel plated tail; said, "Yes sir!" and stood back; and still the commander said nothing.

Merely, he stood still and stared at his encircling captains; not individually; not collectively; rather, as it were, cosmically, and without moving his eyes. They were, as has already been mentioned, peculiar eyes; of arc-blue, and uptilted at the corners. Now, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Robinson, their immediate environs were turning black with purple trimmings; a shade calculated to intensify the effect of the eyes themselves.

Mr. Clancy's gaze seemed, in fact, to be full of sorrow; so full that the bystanders had an idea that at any moment they were likely to overflow, spreading sorrow, grief, woe and all sorts of calamity on any one in their vicinity. Silently and unobtrusively, therefore, the captains departed and returned to their various duties, revealing the outer brown circle of the crew, which in turn melted away, multivious and in silence. Also in silence, and leaving Vice-Admiral Hutchins alone with Mr. Robinson, Mr. Clancy moved slowly off on his tour of inspection.

On the poop, the sentry, by this time drowsy past any knowledge of combats, was seated on the taffrail, nodding over a banana. He looked up, met the admiral's gaze and lost all taste for fruit—even including the current mouthful. Even, coming to attention, he bethought himself of a pair of white gloves, forgotten this twelve months past in the side pocket of his tunic and, trembling, ordered arms to put them on. This done, he came so smartly to the present

as to bang his nose severely with his rifle barrel, and for the rest of the afternoon—long after the inspiring influence had been removed—might have been seen marching his beat with the alacrity of one who feels himself closely followed by a red-hot pitchfork.

Then there were those whimsical fellows, the powder loaders on Barge No. 2. A cocked hat with a red plume on it appeared over the rail of the *Santa Elisa;* a face, under the hat, surveyed them; and at once their songs died on their lips; their cigarets flew into the South Atlantic Ocean, and their courage, a moment ago so high, gay and reckless, retired into their regulation boots and stayed there. Ordinarily the loading of the *Santa Elisa* would have been a three-day job; and lo! it was finished by six o'clock that evening. There were other incidents; miracles; steamfitters restored to wakefulness by a single glance; brass-polishing ordinary seamen inspired to make binnacles reflect the sun; engineers —for the admiral was no respecter of steel ladders—suddenly stimulated to tail on bolts that needed tightening, instead of merely playing rumba rhythms with wrenches on the cylinder heads.

By five o'clock both the *Santa Elisa* and the *Santa Marta* were hives of industry; nay, more; warned by grapevine, the gunners in the coast defense battery on the headland were taking a new interest in their guns; and the new admiral had spoken no word. His first remark, following the suppression of the mutiny, was made at ten minutes to six, when, accompanied by half a squadron of cavalry in breastplates, and riding hatless in the state barouche, the Core of the Universe came in person to deliver the admiral's commission.

The cavalry stayed on the pier; President Bo, impatiently waving aside two frock coated secretaries and two other men who were probably secret service agents, came up the gangway alone. There was no guard to receive him, either; no band; no sideboys, no ruffles; he did not seem to miss them. Indeed, it was fairly obvious that President Bo had been celebrating something; possibly the new-signed treaty with Paraguay. His hair was ruffled, his shirt was open at the neck, and in his hand he held an excessively crumpled newspaper.

"Hello, President," said Mr. Clancy gravely.

"My dear friend!" said the president. "You got a cabin? Gawblime, we go there. A little more, I burst into tears. I cry my ruddy eyes out!"

In the cabin, sinking into the one armchair, he flung the crumpled newspaper on the table and carried out his threat.

"Look at that!" blubbered the president of San Pablo. "Just when I sign my treaty! Spoil my day! The rascal!"

It was a Redondian newspaper.

That much, picking it up, Mr. Clancy could discover from its date line. Also, from the fact that in the midst of its smudgy type it printed one very large picture of a handsome man, and a very small one of President Bo, looking rather fatter than he actually was, he could deduce that it contained some invidious comparisons between his visitor and President Moreno. Beyond that, the newspaper naturally told him nothing. He laid it down—noticing incidentally that in Spanish one uses question marks upside down at the beginning of sentences—and took a long look at the president.

"They been treadin' on your tail, Excellency?" asked the admiral sympathetically.

Señor Bo grabbed the newspaper.

"Can't you read, you fool?" he sobbed. "Tread on my tail! They tread on your tail! They tread on both our tail! You dunno Spanish. Never mind, I tell you. This Moreno—you know what he say? This I got here his government organ—where he say what he think—like official. He give me hell for buy all you gentlemen, an' ask if I'm goin' to have a ruddy war!"

"Well, you are," asked Mr. Clancy reasonably, "ain't you?"

"How can I have a ruddy war," wailed the president. "Like he say, what I got to make a war about? An' suppose I just go after him, he say he call in the United States. I don't want to fight no United States."

"No," said the admiral thoughtfully. "Nor me."

"So he insult me. You ought to read.

I get you that interpreter. I can't read myself. I got my inferiority complex back again. Oh, dear!"

MR. CLANCY seated himself. Out of their conjunctivæ, now frankly black, his electric-blue eyes stared at the top of Señor Bo's bowed head.

"Say, this inferiority complex," he said slowly. "Does it hurt?"

"Oooh!" said Señor Bo. "Yes. No."

He flung up an agonized face.

"You wait till you get somebody insult you," he cried hysterically, "an' you can't do nothin' back at him—"

"Is that what it is?"

"Certainly that's what it is, idiot! Then it don't hurt you, but you burn inside, an' you can't sleep nights, an' you open your newspaper at your breakfast an' you writhe in your insides because you see his picture, an' you want to catch hold of his stomach with your hands and pull it out an' dance on it, an' you can't because you're president—"

"Say," said Mr. Clancy, "say. I know what you're talkin' about."

"*You* do?"

"Yeah, me. I may be only a sailor," said the admiral slowly, "but you know I got kind of good blood in me. Irish kings."

"My grandmomma was Irish," sobbed his Excellency. "Smoked a clay pipe. Nice feller."

He wiped his eyes.

"But you ain't no president," he said, "an' you're not little an' fat. Anybody insult you, you catch hold of his stomach—"

"Not if he's got a gunman either side of him," said Mr. Clancy. "But I'm liable to get there just the same. A guy threw paper money at me once, an' said, 'Here!' An' that's why I'm *here*."

"Why you're here? You got ulterior motive to command my fleet?"

"Ul— What's that?"

"Ulterior motive. I dunno," said Señor Bo weakly. "Whatever you do, it don't help me. I wanna go to war with Redondo. I can't. What the hell? I get my inferiority complex back. Never mind."

"Mm," said Mr. Clancy.

He arose and for a moment paced back and forth in the narrow stern cabin. In the tunnels of purpurahaemorrhageitis, his eyes blazed. Finally he paused in front of Señor Bo.

"President," he said.

President Bo looked up at him tearfully.

"You want to get a cause for war with Redondo."

"Yes, but—"

"I'm down here to get even with that guy that said, 'Here' an' threw money at me."

"If he threw money—"

"Never mind that. I'm paid to run your navy. Suppose I fix up this war for you—cause an' all—will you agree to somethin'?"

"You fix up a cause? A good one? So the United States can't—"

"I ain't cravin' to fight no superdreadnaughts," said the admiral. "All I'm aimin' to do is get level with old Parkins. You don't know him, so shut up. The scheme I got in mind, we both profit. Anyhow, you get your war. Now then. If I fix it, will you do two things for me?"

"What?"

"I want my pay in gold, for one thing."

"Yes!"

"An' the other thing," said Mr. Clancy darkly, "you ain't got in your possession at the moment, but you will have. I'll be gettin' it for you. So it won't hurt you to give me what you ain't got anyway. Is it a deal?"

"Yes. But—"

"Nemmind 'but'," said the admiral sternly. "Now then. This interpreter that was goin' to teach me all the dirty words. You said he was a bad man. How bad is he?"

The president made expansive gestures with his arms.

"Everything," he said. "Anything you want. Murder—anything. Nice feller."

Mr. Clancy seated himself again.

"All right," he said, resting his chin on his knuckles and looking more Mephistophelian than ever. "Send for him!"

TO BE CONCLUDED

COMPOUND INTEREST

By HUGH PENDEXTER

ATTORNEY BLAKE, the Union Railroad's lookout man at the State capital, smoothed the irritation from his brow as he entered the county recorder's office and suavely inquired—

"This is Mr. Peters?"

"This is," was the laconic reply of the elderly man, whose white hair, mustache and eyebrows contrasted sharply with his somber black clothes. "You're trying to find the Honorable Washburn W. Gilly, I'm told. He's tied up for a bit. You're the railroad feller. Squat an' smoke. He'll pass by this winder when he escapes."

"An outstanding man. A big man. A basic man. The State is proud of him," said Blake gustily as he dropped into an ancient armchair, lighted a cigar and left the cigar case on the desk for Mr. Peters to patronize.

"He's floor leader of the House," mumbled the ancient as he selected a weed.

"A big, sound, basic man!" warmly repeated Blake.

"Yeah. Weighs two hundred. Oh, Wash is all right. But when I think of the old days, when you done your electioneering with a shotgun and opened court with a sixshooter, all this flying round in a white vest and 'fumery on your hair seems sort of tame and pindling. Regular he-men are fizzling out, young feller. Raddios and autermobiles and these danged smooth roads ain't helped the race any. And ukeleles and their slinking music have helped do the mischief. In the old days—ah, there was a man!" He stared through the window to the faded blue of distant hills.

"You were saying there was a man," prompted Blake.

Peters switched his head about and blinked at the speaker, then found the trail and nodded his head. In a reverential voice he elucidated:

"Cat-Foot Bill was some simon-pure hellion. If he'd stuck to his knitting he'd be mighty big punkins today. I can see him now, walking in that easy, sly way of his, covering the ground with-

out seeming to move a muscle. Sort of drifted along. He had the best outlook of any young feller I know. When in hard luck there was nothing in the State that could touch him. Prosperity sp'iled his career."

Blake eased him along by doubting if a man would be undone by prosperity. The elderly man did not seem to hear the attorney. Again he refreshed his recollections by consulting the blue silhouette in the west. Then he began:

"Yeah, seems like yesterday that he got his start by stumbling over that dead man on the edge of Hays City. The two of us was making the town at nightfall. We'd lighted and was leading our hosses. The critters shied and balked, and Cat-Foot found himself staring down at some unfortunate man. We supposed the feller was drunk. Cat-Foot struck a match. Dawggone if the man hadn't a hanker tied across the lower half of his face! His open eyes stared up at us over the edge of the cloth, but they saw nothing. We'd heard gunfire east of the town when we was riding up, but s'posed some of the boys was having a little fun.

"Now, Cat-Foot was as quick with his head as he was soft on his feet. Sharp as a weasel, he said, 'This man's a train robber. At least, he's a robber of some sort. We'll pack him in and git the reward. The Union is paying a thousand a head, dead or alive.'

" 'But we didn't kill him,' I reminded.

" 'Some one did. Railroad ain't fussy about who does the killing. They just want to know a robber is dead. Hope he's one of the James Boys.'

"That's how quick he was to see the main chance. Finds a dead masked man, drilled through the heart. Zing! Zip! Just like that he had it all thought out. I opened my mouth and closed it. For Cat-Foot had his knife out and was making two holes in his shirt. Then with a lighted match he touched up the edges. You'd swear and vow they was bullet holes made at close range, barely grazing the hide. The man's gun was empty. Cat-Foot eased off three shots from his own .45. I'll admit I was scared. I didn't believe we could run any such bluff on the Union. Cat-Foot hushed me up and we packed the evidence to the railroad station. Sure enough, the westbound had been held up by five masked men and relieved of some seventy thousand dollers.

"Nearly the whole town was out to the scene of the holdup. We found the station agent seething with excitement and trying to telegraph. The man nearly had a fit when Cat-Foot stuck his head through the small winder. He jumped to grab a pretty little revolver. Cat-Foot yelped, 'Leave that trifle alone unless you want it to part your hair with. We've just dropped in to say we've killed a man we reckon is a robber. He fired two shots at me, and I nailed him. Come out and take a look at the scenery.'

"The man hesitated. I soothed him, explaining, 'My friend ain't no robber. He loves good folks. He's a robber killer.'

"He come out, sort of cringing and fidgety. 'Your watch is safe,' quieted Cat-Foot. 'Here's the evidence.'

" 'You've actually killed a train robber!' yelled the agent. 'You've brought along the corpus delicktoo!' An' he threw his arms around my friend's neck and kissed him before my friend could draw a weapon and protect himself. Then he ran babbling into the office and began punishing the talking wire. After a bit of waiting the wire got mad and spluttered back. The agent come to the ticket window and said, 'Superintendent says he must see the corpus. He's in Junction City. You take it into the junction and you'll git the money. You can ship it in an empty freight car. Take along your hosses if you want to.'

"Cat-Foot was disappointed. He had reckoned on the agent paying us. He said right out it was all dumb foolishness. The train was robbed. The money was taken. A masked robber was dead. And then have to go some two hundred miles to be paid off! But a thousand dollars just then was bigger then a Texas longhorn. We loaded our hosses and the evidence into an empty and suffered the worst ride we'd ever taken.

"I remember how Cat-Foot stood still and breathed deep after we got out at the junction, and how he said, real

pious-like, 'Thank God we've lit! Nothing will ever seem hard again. We sure earned that thousand.'

"We hired a man to fetch along the evidence in a cart and rode our nags up to the office. The super, a fat, fussy man with pale whiskers, was bent over a desk when we lugged in the evidence and removed the blanket. The super gave a yell and cried, 'Cover it up! What's this mean?'

"Cat-Foot gently explained, 'It's that train-robber you've been wanting to have killed. Here he is. Here's us. Want to see the bullet holes in my shirt?'

"The super got back some of his color and shook his head. 'We ain't paying for what happened to you. Just for what's happened to him.' And he pointed to the floor. Then, picking up a pencil, he asked, 'What's his name?'

"We'd never reckoned on that. We gawped at each other, and I said that we didn't know the man's name. I spoke a split second ahead of Cat-Foot's warning kick. The super threw down the pencil, sighed and explained that the road couldn't pay for something that hadn't any name. He added, 'You seem to have the corpus delicktoo, but your claim ain't valid till we have the man's name.'

"'I'll tell you, if you'll give me a chance,' said Cat-Foot. 'It's Jesse James.'

"The super shook his head sorrowfully and pointed to the morning paper, front page. It seems that Jess was robbing a bank in Missouri on the day of the holdup at Hays City.

"'What do you want us to name him?' I asked.

"'You don't understand,' patiently explained the super. 'We must have his real name. I can't report to headquarters that I'm paying out a thousand for an unnamed robber. Home office keeps books. There has to be a record for every cent that's paid out.'

"Cat-Foot gave him a black look and asked softly, 'If we tote the evidence into Kansas City we won't be any better off?'

"'Not unless you give the real name. You've told me you can't name him.'

"'Just where are you headin', old hossfly?' demanded Cat-Foot.

"The little man got pink at that. He replied mighty quick, 'I'm trying to tell you two that we won't pay a cent for this man. We've let you have the use of an empty to travel here. I've decided not to make any charge for that. I believe you've got grit enough to bag real train robbers, and that you'll remember next time to get all the necessary facts. If you fill all the requirements, we'll be happy to pay for all you can slay and identify.'

"There was silence. The super reached for his hat. Then Cat-Foot said, 'Of course we can ride back to Hays?'

"'I'll be glad to give you passes, as I think your mistake was an honest one. But we can't transport your hosses. It's easy, coming east, as we have quite a few empties. But westbound trains are crowded. You could sell your hosses and buy new ones at Hays.'

"'Yeah,' agreed Cat-Foot. 'Or we could hitch them on behind the last car and tell them to jump when we come to a bridge.' Then, like magic, his face was all smiles. He said, 'We'll ride back. But you're paying a thousand for every dead train robber, if rightly named and corpus delivered?'

"'We'll be glad to do that. You needn't bother to come along with the evidence. Just mail in all the facts and we'll send the money. But the body must be delivered.'

"'Thanks,' said Cat-Foot. 'You sure treated us noble. It's all right for us to wave our hands at the westbound train when she pulls out?'

"'No! no! The express messenger might shoot at you, thinking you was a robber,' said the super. 'Take the evidence out, please. We'll have nothing to do with it.'

"IT COST us fifteen dollars to bury that robber. Cat-Foot insisted we look the town over, and asked where the super lived. We found the place, a big house if they'd let it alone instead of having sharp-pitched roofs with funny little wooden turrets all over it. I asked a man what sort of a building they called it. He said it was English

Gothic of the purest type. Cat-Foot wasn't interested in architecture. He wanted to know the name of the street. The same man told us—Washington.

"We didn't do much talking on the ride west. Cat-Foot brooded and sulked until we was within a mile of Salina, when he suddenly became all sunshine.

" 'That's right,' I encouraged. 'Just wash it from your mind.'

" 'Wash a thousand dollars from my mind? Don't be so foolish.'

"We found Salina red-hot over a feud between some Texas Brush poppers and Kansas gunmen. I wanted to push on, but Cat-Foot would stay. But we kept in the background until the big fight was pulled off in Dent's saloon. Three men were killed. All needed killing to a certain degree. Cat-Foot surprised me by offering to handle the funeral.

"He had two carpenters make six boxes. He filled three with the right weight of stones and dirt. T'other three were used for the vanquished. The first three were buried. He made out a paper for each of the other three boxes. He gave each man's full name, age, birthplace, politics, the gang he used to ride with. He pasted the papers on the boxes and shipped the whole lot to the super's home address. We stabled our hosses and went along with the freight.

"Cat-Foot explained to me, 'He can't come any game this time. We'll keep out of sight till the delicktoos have been delivered. Then we'll march in and collect!'

"But what do you think? They delivered the boxes at the house while the super's wife was giving a party. She was expecting a lot of books from Kansas City. We was at the front door when the man run into the parlor and yelled that the boxes were filled with dead men. I've seen folks racing to new goldfields. I've seen folks leaving a burning house. But I never see folks git such a move-on as the folks did in quitting that Washington street house.

"We was a bit scared by the rumpus and kept hid till the next day. Then we called on the super and asked if he'd received our outlaws. He nearly threw a fit, but Cat-Foot was firm and, finding they'd been buried, paid out of our own pockets to have the boxes dug up. But the papers, pasted on the outside, had been scraped off, or something. The road refused to pay.

"On our way back to Salina Cat-Foot explained that he never would have sent the freight to the house except to make sure it arrived. 'After this,' he said, 'we'll send everything to the office. How could I know that woman was expecting a lot of books?'

" 'You mean some more are going along?' I asked, and beginning to feel queer in the head.

" 'I'll never quit just because luck seems to be running against me,' he said. 'I've got the big idea still up my sleeve. We'll git out at Abilene.'

"I couldn't see any point to it, but Cat-Foot had a head on him. 'Place in here I want you to see,' he told me on that first night in Abilene.

"It was some waxworks. Every well known murderer in the States was on exhibition in wax. Ding bust if I wa'n't fooled up to the hilt! I went for my gun when I came upon a glaring man with a .45 half drawn. I put two bullets through him quicker'n you can spit. Other men must 'a' been likewise taken in, as most of the male specimens were quite extensively shot up.

"It was the supper hour and the place was empty. Cat-Foot bluntly asked the owner, 'Will you sell five of these monsters?'

"I thought my friend was going crazy. The owner hungrily said, 'That's a promise. What'll you give?'

" 'They seem to be pretty badly bunged up,' said Cat-Foot. 'Maybe I'd better buy fresh ones.'

" 'No! No! No!' cried the owner. 'Them bullet holes increase the value. See how natural I've made 'em look. See here—I like you. I'll make a sacrifice. I'll take a hundred apiece for any five you want to pick out.'

" 'I won't let you make a sacrifice,' said Cat-Foot generously. 'I'll give fifty apiece for those five with the whiskers. Fetch out the boxes they come in.'

"The man see he meant business and did as told. All lettering, advertising the show, was scraped off. The weight was about right per box. Cat-Foot

worked all night, until he had a paper made out for each. He made 'em in duplicate, one set to mail, one to send along with the boxes. You simply had to believe what he wrote. Then we had the boxes hauled to our room. I'd defy any coroner on earth to say they weren't the genuine article—unless he took them out of the box. I was for sending them along *pronto*. But Cat-Foot was a thinker. He just waited till there was a holdup on the Union at Rock Spring. Four days later he shipped the boxes and sent a letter explaining as how they were members of the Rock Spring outfit that he and me had caught off guard while they were on a toot.

"The day they arrived in Junction City he received a telegram congratulating him and me on our noble victory. The super wanted us to jump a train to Hays City where we would be welcomed as heroes. The papers had columns on the big killing. We'd planned on having the money sent us according to promise, but Cat-Foot said if they wanted to make a hero of us there wasn't any reason why we shouldn't be accommodating. He went right out and bought himself a big finger ring and a watch. Station agent hunted us up to say Junction City was filled with people anxious to meet us.

" 'Where be they keeping the corpus delicktoos?' Cat-Foot asked the agent.

" 'Great Scott! How can I tell that. Buried 'em most likely. Your tickets are ready whenever you feel like going after the gold.'

"We bought him several drinks because his talk sounded so good. On the quiet Cat-Foot told me, 'I'm mighty glad they're buried. The papers done the business.'

"NEXT morning we went to catch the train dressed in our best. We got our tickets. The agent seemed awfully pleased to see us. The westbound came in and a freckled newsboy swung off and yelped:

" 'City papers! All about five outlaws melting! All about the disappearing train robbers!'

"Cat-Foot grabbed my arm and hustled me aboard. I was dazed. 'This train is heading west,' I told him.

" 'The more west she heads the righter she heads for us,' he grimly replied. 'Those danged fools must 'a' kept 'em in the hot sun, or near a stove.' We pulled out, passing the eastbound on a siding. We bought papers, and there was the whole story, with a statement by the superintendent, in which he said he had always suspected us, and that he should insist the law took its course. Until we reached the next stop we rode with our hats over our faces. Quitting the train, we laid low until the evening eastbound pulled in.

"We boarded the smoker and left it when the train began slowing down for Salina. Then we hustled to the livery stable and got our hosses. The man charged us five dollers because my hoss bit him. Just a holdup. He knew we was wanted and he figured to cash in on us. We paid and lit out, heading south on hotfoot . . .

"And right then and there began Cat-Foot's downfall. The first night out he confessed:

" 'We've been licked for lack of book l'arning. They can fool us every time with some new game because we haven't any savvy. The trail forks if you don't go along my way. I must git some book l'arning, or be arrested for what the fool newspapers call a fraud. Guns are going out. That fussy super with pink whiskers can outgame us every time. Newspapers, too, make it bad for innocent, ignorant men. What say?'

"I couldn't throw in with him on his new trail. He took it. It sp'iled what I call 'native genius'. Cat-Foot was a man who might have crawled high and handsome if he'd kept away from schools and books. Yes, sir, plumb sp'iled him. That was forty-five years ago."

He picked up the county paper and became absorbed in the real estate items. Mr. Blake was irritated. It was no way to leave a man up in the air. He said as much. Mr. Peters shook his white head and stared bleakly at the blue hills. Gazing through the window, the lawyer beheld the Honorable Washburn W. Gilly swinging along. He was a large, portly man. Blake had heard much about him since coming to the Middle West. He was keenly inter-

ested in him, as his particular business would go forward, or be held up, according to Gilly's attitude. In the day of clean shaven men, Gilly, with his venerable white beard and sturdy bearing, was an outstanding figure.

Blake hurried forth to accost him. He presented his card and explained his errand.

Mr. Gilly pursed his lips and stared thoughtfully at the lawyer.

"Of course your road is hostile to the bill," he frankly admitted. "As chairman of the committee to which the bill is referred I have a clear idea of what you are after."

"We consider it an immoral bill, a confiscatory bill, and one the courts will pronounce to be unconstitutional," warmly insisted Blake. "If the railroad has to comply with its outrageous terms, then freight and passenger tariffs will be doubled."

"I have nothing to do with the mechanics of running a railroad," was the crisp reply. "Rates can't be advanced at the road's pleasure, thank the Lord! I'm a very busy man this morning. Going into conference now. The bill, *per se,* is all right. Its purpose is very humane—to save life. Perhaps there are phases of it that might be reconsidered . . . Ah! I see the Honorable James Colbrake Peters is in his office. A very conscientious, high minded citizen. I am not ashamed to confess that I often rely on his nature and sterling judgment in various legislative matters. He has what I term the unbiased, the detached viewpoint. A diamond in the rough but with a heart that's pure as the first snow, and a mind as clear as a crystal . . . Judge Peters! Oh, ho!" His deep voice boomed like a bell.

The window of the county recorder's office went up. Mr. Gilly advanced and explained:

"This gentleman is here on the railroad bill. I wish you would listen to him and digest his argument, and report to me sometime this evening. Good morning, Mr. Blake. Good morning, Judge Peters."

Feeling foiled, Mr. Blake returned to the recorder's office. Mr. Peters greeted him by eagerly asking:

"Did he say anything about the public weal? No? He usually does. Where in Tophet does he trap all those rare words. I know what a welt is. But weal! Two hundred pounds of sp'iled life."

"You know my business here, Judge Peters," said Blake. "I am fighting that bill that would abolish all grade crossings in the so-called Hackett Division. The country is as flat as this table. One can see for miles in every direction. Four roads and several trails cross our tracks in that division. There is no menace to life at any of those crossings. To elevate the tracks would be monstrous, both from an engineering and a financial point of view."

"We have to think of our citizens," explained Mr. Peters. "Railroad folks always kick. Folks in these parts are all het up because your road refused to put in that little spur track to my brother's place."

"Why, Judge, that little spur track, as you call it, would cost more than thirty thousand dollars. It's unthinkable! Your brother—first I've heard of the relationship—even hasn't any business. Not enough to justify a siding."

"But he will build up a fine business after he gets the spur line," blandly explained Mr. Peters. "It will cost your road a hundred thousand to fight that righteous bill. And even then you'd lose."

"It's the most outrageous holdup ever attempted!"

Mr. Peters smiled and fluffed his patriarchial beard. Then he replied:

"No ranker than when train robbers were holding up your line for a hundred thousand dollars a crack. Why, if I'd had my share for what the company owes for the genuine train robber me and Cat-Foot took into Junction City, I could let my brother have what money he needs. If I'd put it to interest."

"You and your friend didn't kill that robber, by your tell!"

"You never can prove that by findin' who did kill him," gravely reminded Mr. Peters. "We delivered him. Your road wanted him thoroughly dead. We took him in that way. One of the finest corpus delicktoos a person ever see. Red tape cheated us. It's that un-

justice that makes folks out here so set against the Hackett Division bill."

Mr. Blake lighted a cigar, nodded his head slowly and murmured:

"So that is the little mouse in the meal? You folks can worry along with the grade crossings if the spur is built, or if that reward is paid?"

"You've got the idea!"

"No other demands would be made on the road?"

"No."

"Very well, Mr. Peters. We see eye to eye. I realize the justice of your demand. It should have been settled before. How shall the check be made out? One thousand dollars."

"Make it out to James Colbrake Peters. Compounded at six per cent for forty-five years. It's a trifle longer than that, but we won't pinch pennies. But there is the five dollars paid the stable man, who was bit by my hoss. Then there was wax figgers. Certain burial expenses, two hundred an' fifty more—"

"Perpetuating a fraud!" groaned the lawyer.

"An' there's fifteen dollars for buryin' a genuine robber. It will cost you a hundred thousand to make a fight. There's a hundred an' fifteen dollars for coffins an' carpenters. Well, well. We won't pinch a few dollars. Call it an even seventeen thousand."

The lawyer, checkbook in hand, eyed him venomously and ironically asked—

"Any other little item you wish to add?"

Mr. Peters ruffled his ancient beard thoughtfully, and decided:

"Why, yes. We both lost much time. Call it a hundred 'n' fifty."

The lawyer abandoned sarcasm to demand—

"And if this claim is paid the grade crossings will not be disturbed, and your brother will worry along without his spur track?"

"That's right. I'll put my brother to work in some other business. It was to be his business in the Hackett Division, so-called, to build up such a population as to make the elevated crossings necessary."

"I'll write a check for an even ten thousand dollars."

"Don't sp'ile your paper. I can't shade it a cent. Seventeen thousand, one hundred and fifty dollars. It's small pertaters, any way you look at it. Company waits almost half a century afore payin' for a dead train robber. I can see how the papers will play it up. We was the only folks to deliver a corpus delicktoo . . . On receipt of a proper check the committee on railroad legislation will report against the proposed elevated crossings. Of course, Cat-Foot will feel bitter along of being cheated out of the reward money all these years. But he'll stand by any agreement I make."

"Cat-Foot! When did he get back into the picture?" gasped the lawyer.

"I thought I explained that. Cat-Foot, full of promise years an' years ago, is that two-hundred pound failure, the Honorable Washburn William Gilly, who went to school an' dulled his native wits. Thanks—and goodby. You'll find the north side of the train is the shady side."

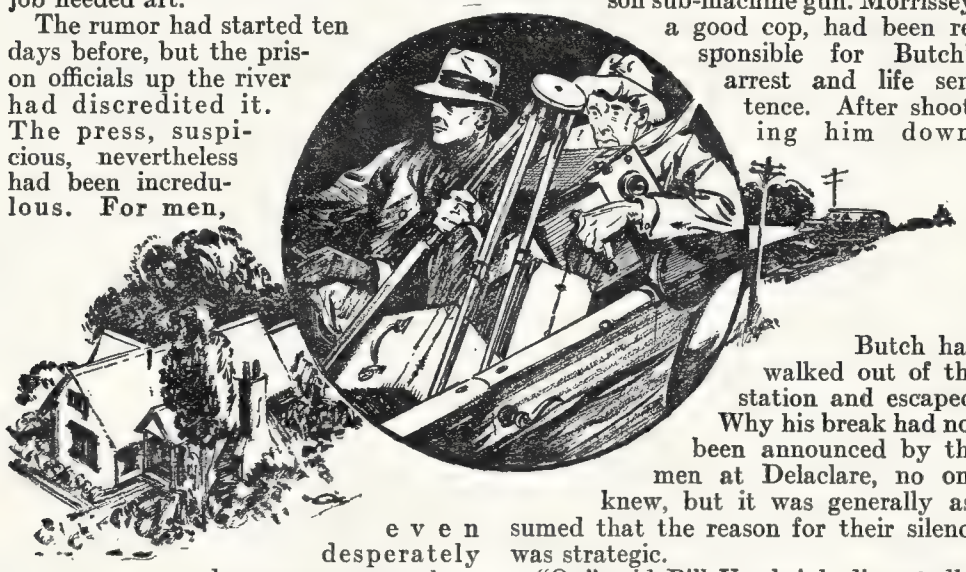
"Everywhere I've been out here seems to be shady," was the bitter reply.

Pinky Gets Red

By HENRY LACOSSITT

IT WAS true; there was no doubt of it now. What had been rumor had become fact: Butch Burkey was back after breaking out of Delaclara Prison. Bill Vossbrink, who was No. 1 news man on the *Globe*, had just run in with the first part of a story that was breaking fast. He intended to run out again as soon as he grabbed a photographer. The rest of this Burkey job needed art.

The rumor had started ten days before, but the prison officials up the river had discredited it. The press, suspicious, nevertheless had been incredulous. For men,



even desperately dangerous men such as Butch Burkey, never before had cracked the steel and stone of Delaclara. Even killers like Butch Burkey feared and respected Delaclara so much they called it Siberia. When you went there you didn't get out until your time was served.

Therefore, this rumor that Butch Burkey was out was hard to believe. Yet it persisted. There came to the city room of the *Globe* vague whisperings. These whisperings gave the news men pause, for if Butch had made that break it was the biggest story in the U.S.A, and you could reserve the Canadian and Mexican rights too. Butch was a public enemy of unimpeachable standing.

So the rumor survived. But now it was a fact in glaring headlines.

Butch Burkey, before the eyes of at least a dozen cops, all of whom knew him and therefore could confirm the rumor that he was out of jail, had walked into the 16th and shot down Police Captain Morrissey with a Thompson sub-machine gun. Morrissey, a good cop, had been responsible for Butch's arrest and life sentence. After shooting him down, Butch had walked out of the station and escaped. Why his break had not been announced by the men at Delaclare, no one knew, but it was generally assumed that the reason for their silence was strategic.

"Or," said Bill Vossbrink disgustedly, looking at his wrist watch, "maybe they're just coy."

That crack got a laugh from everybody around the city desk, for Bill was popular; also, he was envied, and with reason.

He was a tall, handsome man, still young, but with enough wisdom revealed in his features to invest him with more than usual interest. He had sparkling brown eyes, a high straight nose, a thick shock of black hair and a black mustache which topped a pleasant mouth. As far as clothes went, he might

have been a tailor's model. Besides that, it was generally conceded that he was the best reporter in town. Everybody was saying that in handling this Burkey story he probably would, in the end, be responsible for Butch's arrest and collect the big reward. Bill had done such things before.

He stood at the city desk, puffing his pipe impatiently, and told his yarn to Ed Sullivan, who was city editor, while a rewrite man took it down. Around the desk stood the entire news force and the copy desk, and on the fringes of the crowd copy boys and stenographers gaped in frank admiration.

"Well," he resumed, "if they weren't coy, they were dumb. I'm not sure if the cops knew, but if they did they were dumb too. I can't believe Morrissey knew—"

"That's all right," said Ed. "We're razzing the administration."

"I know," said Bill, "but Morrissey was a good cop."

"Uh-huh," said Ed. "But we can still razz—"

"Hell!" said Bill impatiently, looking at his watch again. "Postpone the debate. I left that Kirby kid out there, but I want to be back when it breaks. I gotta get Tommy and scram."

Tommy was first string photographer; that Kirby kid was a cub Bill had taken along. Bill looked with exasperation at his editor, took out his tobacco pouch, a handsome affair of tooled leather with a silver zipper, and filled his pipe. The pipe was a classic, a straight grained French brier that had cost him at least ten dollars. That pipe and that pouch were known, with their cost, throughout the city room of the *Globe*. As he took them out, a man at the back of the crowd edged forward gently until he stood directly before the city desk.

He was a tall, stooped man, lanky, but with a suggestion of hidden power in the slow movements of his bony frame. His arms were long and ended in rough hands. He had red hair and a freckled face, mild blue eyes that held a hint of tragedy, and a gentle mouth. His hair was awry, in fact looked as if it never had been otherwise; his clothes were worn and frayed. The coat was of one hue, the vest another, the trousers of a third, garments salvaged from the residue of other years. He was second string photographer, and he was called, although his hair was flaming red, Pinky. The last name was Miller. He was listening to Bill Vossbrink, but his eyes were on Bill's magnificent pipe.

The reporter noticed Pinky and forgot his impatience for the moment. He grinned.

"Hello, Pink," he said. "How's Old Eagle-eye?"

"All right," said Pinky. He grinned embarrassedly.

"Well, I guess I can go back to that story now."

Everybody laughed at that. Even Pinky laughed. He was used to this sort of thing. Bill Vossbrink had only made use of a stock joke and only as Bill Vossbrink could. Not too many years before, the two of them had come to work on the *Globe*. They were friends of a sort. But their present situations were characteristic of their respective personalities; and because they were friends of a sort, Pinky had automatically become Bill Vossbrink's humorous Man Friday.

FIRST there was, although Pinky was approximately the same age as Bill Vossbrink—which was about thirty—Pinky's several children who had come at regular intervals for the past few years. That was joke No. 1. The second was about Old Eagle-eye, which referred to Pinky's camera.

For there were no graphlexes in Pinky's life. Old Eagle-eye—Bill Vossbrink's name—a venerable eight-by-ten with tripod and holders and all the rest of the cumbersome paraphernalia, comprised his equipment. And you couldn't exactly snap pictures of horse races and riots with that. Nevertheless, Pinky swore by it. It was his own, purchased second hand from an itinerant portrait photographer years before, and it was as definitely a part of his life as his wife and children, and almost as well loved.

Pinky would use nothing else. It took better pictures, he said—which was true. But, as Bill Vossbrink said, who cared? Tommy took adequate pictures, which, although their quality was not so good,

were taken speedily and efficiently. Therefore, Pinky's life was a long routine of fine tree plantings and women's clubs. His hands were rough from the developer used for thousands of such dramatic scenes. And he probably would be a second-string photographer forever. Bill Vossbrink said he probably would be around to take pictures of the archæologists who dug up the *Globe* building. Bill was a very whimsical fellow.

But Pinky bore such things well. It never occurred to him not to. Just now, aside from a familiar tingling in his ears, he did not mind Bill Vossbrink's chaffing. He listened with admiration as Bill went on with the Burkey yarn, for he was proud to know Bill. Also, he watched the pipe in the great man's hand.

"Butch," Bill was saying, "pulled it so fast those dumb cops didn't have a show. Morrissey was dead by the second bullet. He just pitched forward on his desk like he was resting. Then Butch turned and threw down on those cops. From the way they tell about it, they must have damn near had a fit. Anyway, he gave them a cussing out they'll remember through their pension years."

Bill laughed. So did the rest, including Pinky. The way Bill had said it made it a topper.

"Then he turned and lammed. He even spit on the floor as he went out!"

"My, my!" said Ed. "What a heller!"

"Heller, yeah," said Bill. "But he wasn't so smart this time. I suppose being at Delaclara, even if he did make the break, took something away from him if not out of him. He got away, but *the cops chased him!* Can you tie that?" Bill laughed heartily. "Imagine any of our cops chasing Butch Burkey?"

Pinky Miller cleared his throat and tore his eyes from the pipe in Bill Vossbrink's hand.

"Mr. Sullivan—" he began, but Bill went on with his story.

"Butch had swiped a car and he drove like hell, but those cops kept right on his tail. I followed the cops. Butch drove out to Aspinwall to that house where Joe Zicci kept a place about two years ago. Joe belonged to Butch's mob. Well, the place is vacant now, Joe having gone to Atlanta to visit the Government, but I suppose the mob stored their stuff there, for when Butch got in he barricaded the place and began to shoot hell out of everything in sight. The cops think there must be a whole armory in there. Four of 'em are in Nottingham with assorted wounds, and two have been taken to the undertakers. It's quite a battle, with the cops on the dirty end, so far."

"That's not news," said Ed.

"Now," said Bill, looking at his watch, "the cops, two hundred and fifty of 'em, no less, are going to storm the works as soon as it's dark. They got him cornered anyway, so they think they might as well wait until it's dark and play it safe. I want a picture of that charge."

"Mr. Sullivan—" said Pinky Miller.

Ed Sullivan looked up, but Bill went on.

"I gotta be getting back," he said. "It's almost dark now. Where's Tommy?"

"Mr. Sullivan?" said Pinky anxiously.

"What in hell you want, Pinky?"

"Why," said Pinky mildly, "I just wanted to tell you that Tommy phoned and said he wouldn't be in today. His wife's having a baby."

For a moment Sullivan stared. Bill Vossbrink jerked his pipe from his mouth and swore. Pinky watched the pipe. The others looked at Pinky, and gradually smiles broke out. Ed laughed.

"My Lord!" he said. "Well, we'll send him a gross of diapers, and you can get it, Pinky. You know all about such things."

There was an uproar at this, but Bill Vossbrink did not join it. He turned angrily to Ed Sullivan.

"Listen!" he snapped. "You smart crack and that story's about to break! I gotta have a photographer and I gotta have him quick! You think I'm going to take *him?*"

"Him" was Pinky, and the uproar stopped abruptly. Pinky's naturally fair skin glowed to the tips of his ears.

"I think I could—" he began timidly, but Ed Sullivan cut him off.

The editor was calling Tommy. Pinky looked back at the pipe in Vossbrink's hand. The reporter glared a moment at the photographer, snorted and looked

away. The rest looked at Pinky and smiled. The silence was broken by the snarling voice of Ed Sullivan talking to Tommy.

"Lissen!" Ed shouted. "Isn't the doctor enough? Why do you have to be there? You're no doctor!" He paused. "What! . . . *I* am! Why you—I'll have you— You—" Ed stared helplessly at the phone for a moment, then slammed down the receiver. He looked up at Bill Vossbrink. "The dog hung up! Says he won't come down. He's drunker'n seven hundred dollars. Says he's gonna stay and weigh it!"

Bill Vossbrink swore again. Pinky, heart beating furiously, moved closer to the city desk. Ed looked up and saw him.

"You gotta take Pinky, Bill," he said. "It can't be helped."

"Ah—"

"Lissen!" The editor was impatient now. "Hire a hall yourself! If this is gonna break so soon, Pinky'll have to do. Get along!"

Bill Vossbrink glared angrily from his editor to Pinky, then turned and without a word hurried to his desk.

The room, to Pinky's mild eyes, began to revolve slowly. It gained speed, lost it, was finally still again. His eyes were strangely bright.

"I—I can handle it," he said.

Ed Sullivan shrugged.

"O. K. Get along to the wars, but—" he glared at Pinky, who looked as if some one had struck him lightly with a blunt instrument—"if you muff it . . ." He drew his index finger across his throat.

Pinky said fervently that he would not muff it. He rushed back to the photo department. There, for an instant, he paused, thrilled, to wonder at this sudden and strange situation.

HE looked fondly at old Eagle-eye, taped here, patched there, laughed queerly, loaded the camera and a dozen plate holders, packed them, stuck a flash gun in his pocket and started out. At the door, however, he paused. He put down his equipment and hurried back to a drawer, from which he took a small box. This box he shoved into another pocket, then rushed out. He did not wait for the elevator; he plunged awkwardly down the stairs with his heavy burden, almost colliding with the operator on the ground floor. The operator dodged. Then, seeing who it was, he laughed.

But Pinky did not hear. He rushed to the sidewalk and to a long greyhound of a car standing at the curb. Arrived at it, however, he was stopped.

"Take it easy!" said a voice from the front seat. "This hack's engaged." It was the driver.

Pinky stared.

"Isn't Mr. Vossbrink here?" he asked.

"What's it to you?"

"Why," said Pinky, "I'm the photographer."

"The hell you say!" The driver looked at Pinky's equipment. There was the huge grip which held old Eagle-eye and the tripod; there was the package of holders. Pinky's pockets bulged. The driver chuckled. "O. K," he said. Shrugging, he helped load Pinky's paraphernalia in the back of the car. "Vossbrink'll be here in a minute."

Bill Vossbrink did arrive in a minute, hurrying out of the *Globe* building, bounding across the sidewalk and into the car, where he fell over the bundle of holders and the grip which held the eight-by-ten.

"What the—" began Bill Vossbrink, then saw Pinky. "For the love o' Pete, what's all this?"

"Why, it's the camera and plates."

Pinky felt a slow, familiar tingling at the tips of his ears.

"A camera! Old Eagle-eye? How the hell can you snap action pictures with that blunderbuss?"

"Look, Mr. Vossbrink. You see—"

From his pocket Pinky extracted the box he had taken from the drawer in the photo department. From the box he took a circular gadget which was attached to a rubber tube. The whole business he held up before Bill Vossbrink's annoyed gaze.

"This is a high speed shutter. It goes off at one three-hundredth of a second." Pinky raised his brows, stared expectantly. "Watch!" He pressed the plunger at the end of the rubber tube. As he did there was a click and a wink

of light through the shutter. "That's fast enough for anything, Mr. Vossbrink. It attaches to the lens. It's a good lens, too." He held it up for inspection.

Bill Vossbrink stared a moment, looked at his wristwatch, shrugged impatiently.

"All right," he said resignedly. "Let's go."

He looked darkly at Pinky, then settled back in his seat. The car bounded forward abruptly; Pinky's head snapped. He saw Bill Vossbrink lean forward and hand a flashing badge to the driver. He heard him say:

"Give her all she'll do. The paper'll stand the rap."

He saw the buildings, the pedestrians, the street lights, even adverse traffic lights, fly by at dizzy speed, and he was thrilled. The car was traveling at seventy-five now. He caught his breath, looked shyly at Bill Vossbrink.

"Mr. Vossbrink?" said Pinky.

Vossbrink turned. Pinky took out an old corncob pipe.

"Have you a little tobacco?"

Bill handed over his pouch. Pinky took it, filled his pipe, then held it up. Fascinated, he turned it over in his hands. But he handed it back quickly. The star reporter had produced his own pipe.

Silently they smoked, Pinky watching Bill Vossbrink covertly, wondering how many such romantic adventures he had witnessed; wondering, too, what Mrs. Miller would say if she could see her husband now. He sighed in sheer delight.

But suddenly the car slowed. Ahead, in the murk, Pinky made out the forms of two policemen. From beside the two forms there shot powerful beams of light—spots attached to motorcycles. The spots caught the *Globe* car, held it. The car stopped.

"Where you guys—" began one of the cops. He came up and looked into the car. "Oh, hello, Bill."

"Hello."

"Who's this guy?"

"I'm—"

"He's a photographer," snapped Vossbrink.

"Oh!" said the cop. He caught sight of Pinky's piled mass of gear. "What's all this stuff you got here?"

"Hell!" said Vossbrink. "Those are his tools. I'll write you a letter about 'em some time. Can we go on, now?"

"All right, all right," said the cop. "Don't get tough. We gotta stop everybody goin' out to Aspinwall. It's gonna be really bad when they give Butch the rush act, you know. I only—"

The car was moving again.

"That stuff of yours—" said Vossbrink irritably. "You look like you were going on a trans-Atlantic voyage."

"It's a fine camera, Mr. Vossbrink," said Pinky. "Eastman—German lens. Came out in 19—"

"Nuts!"

Pinky said no more in the face of that, but it did not depress him. Depression, now, was impossible. He felt as if he were flying. He felt also, for the first time in his life, important.

It hypnotized him, but suddenly he came out of it. The car, having entered the suburbs and a region where houses were few, began to slow down. On either side of the road there were thick patches of woods. The woods were darkly mysterious. Menace exuded from those woods, and Pinky, glancing at Vossbrink, saw that the reporter was alert.

"Careful," said Vossbrink to the driver. "Take it easy." The driver nodded. The speed of the car dropped to fifteen miles an hour. "Ahead there at the curve. Pull into the trees to the left."

The driver followed directions. The car stopped.

PINKY started to crawl out, but he hesitated. From the shadows of the trees there had appeared many figures. They bore down on the car swiftly.

"Who is it?" asked a voice in a whisper.

"Miller of the *Globe*," said Pinky promptly. He had heard the boys in the city room say that.

"Who?"

"Hell!" said the reporter. "This is Bill Vossbrink. What's going on?"

There were exclamations from the figures. Pinky, his eyes accustomed to the gloom now, saw that they were policemen. Standing with them he also saw

that Kirby kid.

"Hello, Bill," said a voice. "Who's your pal?"

"He's from the shop," said Vossbrink. "They say he's a photographer." He got out of the car. "Has it happened?"

Somewhere a tiny flashlight glowed. Pinky saw in its beam the little dial of a service wristwatch.

"No, but in a few minutes it will," said the whispering voice.

It went on talking softly to Bill Vossbrink.

Pinky got out of the car. For a moment he stood irresolutely, then turned as one of the cops shot a flashlight into the tonneau of the automobile.

"Gees!" said the cop. "What's all that stuff?"

"That?" said the driver. "Why that's my friend's luggage. He's gonna move into Joe's when Butch moves out."

The cops gave the driver a good laugh. Pinky waited for the laugh to subside.

"Will you give me a lift?" he asked the driver.

"Sure, sure. Maybe we ought to've brought along a porter, though."

The cops gave the driver another good laugh.

Pinky heard the voice of the officer talking to Bill Vossbrink.

"I don't get it yet," he was saying. "There's somethin' phony about it. He hasn't fired a slug for an hour. We been takin' pot shots at the house now an' then, but he won't answer. What you make of that?"

"How do I know?" said Bill Vossbrink. "Maybe he's gone to bed."

The officer ignored Vossbrink's wit.

"I gotta hunch," he said, "that Butch is gonna spring somethin'. Maybe a bomb." There was a murmuring among the assembled policemen. "He's good at that, you know. He rubbed out a whole mob that way once. Used to toss 'em in the Army."

"Wait a minute." Bill Vossbrink left the officer and came over to Pinky. "Well," he said, "get along up front of the woods and get a picture of this business if you can. Maybe old Eagle-eye'll scare Butch so he'll holler uncle."

He nudged the grip that held Pinky's camera with his foot.

Pinky's eyes narrowed fractionally, but Vossbrink, followed by Kirby, moved off and rejoined the officer. They disappeared into the gloom of the woods. The others followed.

"Let's go," said Pinky to the driver.

They picked up the equipment and began to move through the trees. Everywhere there were policemen. They lounged against the trees, or stretched full length on the ground. Pinky, stepping carefully, came to the edge of the woods and put down the bundle of holders. A moment later the driver appeared with the grip that held Old Eagle-eye.

"Lord!" said the driver. "It was a wheelbarrow we should've brought."

Pinky paid no attention. He heard but was scarcely aware of the whispered conversation of the numerous policemen around him. They were speculating on what Butch Burkey had up his dangerous sleeve. Most of them seemed to believe, with the officer talking to Bill Vossbrink, that he probably would use his World War bomb-throwing experience to good advantage. The thought did not seem to comfort them.

In the open space before the trees, Pinky set up Old Eagle-eye. Thoroughly used to the gloom now, he took in the lay of the land. Back of him was the patch of forest; before him, across an open space, the width of which he could not estimate in the feeble light, sat the house where Joe Zicci once had managed a notorious resort and where Butch Burkey lay in wait, like an ogre, for unwary cops. The open space surrounded the house. So did the trees, except for a break where a drive once had run, and it was in this encircling belt of woods that the cops were. They also completely surrounded the house.

The house itself was not sinister. A two-story frame, it looked very much like the modest dwelling of a middle class suburbanite, except for a one-storied porch which ran clear around it.

On this porch Pinky heard Bill Vossbrink, somewhere back in the trees, say that Joe Zicci used to serve his patrons with "the lousiest liquor in Christendom."

Old Eagle-eye set up, Pinky looked through the glass. He could, of course,

see nothing. Baffled for the moment, he occupied his time in attaching the shutter to the German lens. Absently, then, he undid the bundle of holders and took one out. He stood occupied with his problem, the holder in his hand, for if he could not see, he could not focus. It was serious, for, he realized, with a sudden quickening of his pulse, this was Old Eagle-eye's big chance as well as his own. He mustn't muff it. He remembered acutely the expression and gesture of Ed Sullivan in saying that he mustn't muff it.

Looking around, he saw that the driver had vanished. Pinky was alone in the open space.

"Judas!" he heard a voice behind him say. "Look at that guy! Hey!"

Pinky turned. At the edge of the trees he made out a group of police.

"Say, you," said the voice. "You wanta get stenciled?"

"What?" said Pinky.

"I asked if you wanted to get shot!"

"No," said Pinky, and thought of a way to focus.

He thrust the holder into the camera, put his heel at one of the prongs of the tripod, began to pace toward the house. Back of him there came, from the trees, frightened exclamations in whispers. Pinky heard them, but they made no impression. By pacing the distance he would be able to focus exactly.

HE reached the railing of the porch and stopped. He turned to go back, but paused. From somewhere above him he had heard a rustle. Looking up, he saw nothing, then strode back to the camera. He forgot immediately about the rustle.

As he reached the camera there came from the trees the angry whisper of Bill Vossbrink.

"Hey, Pinky!" said Bill. "Are you nuts?"

"What?" asked Pinky. He was about to adjust his camera.

"I asked if you were nuts!" snapped Bill. "You might have been shot to pieces. And you got a wife and five kids!"

"Yeah," said Pinky.

He twisted the lens to open it wider, then began to turn the screw that manipulated the carriage. With knowledge born of years of photographing Sunday Schools and bricklayings and Ladies' Aids, Pinky set the carriage according to the distance and knew that it was correct to the fraction of an inch. Old Eagle-eye stood alert and ready. Pinky eyed the camera fondly and proudly.

Back of him he heard that Kirby kid utter a derisive exclamation. He heard Bill Vossbrink say:

"The boob's balmy! Well, it's his own funeral."

Pinky thought it was too, but he believed Bill was talking about Butch Burkey. He got out his flash gun.

Back of him, again, he heard voices—this time voices whispering commands. He heard the whispers travel through the belt of trees and grow faint. He heard an ominous silence. He fixed his flash gun. His other hand was on the plunger of the rubber tube attached to the shutter.

From the trees there came a faint whistle. As it sounded, there rushed from the trees surrounding the open space the small army of cops. They poured into the open space and past Pinky, running slowly and silently.

Pinky took a last look at things. He could see the cops running through the murk. When they were almost on the house, he opened the shutter and raised the hand that held the flash gun.

He fired the flash gun and closed the shutter.

The surroundings, for an instant, were lighted with a weird glow. Pinky caught a glimpse of everything—the trees, the cops, the open space, the house, and something else, although he could not be sure.

Seated on the roof of the porch, looking in his direction, he thought he had seen a man.

Pinky coughed. The flash gun had made a lot of smoke. Before him there was silence. The cops had stopped. Then he heard a yell. It was a panicky yell. There was a single, awful word—

"Bomb!"

Rubbing his eyes, which smarted from the smoke, Pinky heard a furious rush-

ing. He heard shouts of fright. Through the thinning smoke he saw, bearing down upon him, the wave of stampeding cops.

Astonished, he had neither the time nor presence of mind to get out of the way of that wave. It came abreast him, passed over him, knocked him flat, but miraculously missed Old Eagle-eye.

For an instant he lay there, dazed, then sat up, saw that the camera was still standing. As he did, some one grabbed his shoulder.

"Pinky!" snapped a voice in his ear. "Pinky! Get your damn fool self out of here before Butch throws another—"

Bill's words stopped abruptly. Standing behind Pinky, his hand tightened on the photographer's shoulder. For they both saw, running toward them through the gloom, another figure. It was alone. Pinky gasped. He remembered the man he had seen sitting on the porch roof, and that man could be no other than one of America's leading public enemies, the man who had broken Delaclara prison—Butch Burkey.

But neither Pinky nor Bill Vossbrink moved. Perhaps they couldn't. They remained motionless, rooted to the spot.

The figure came closer, was on them. But Old Eagle-eye was in the way. Running low, the figure collided with the camera like a football player taking out an opposing tackler. The camera flew up, came down, missed Pinky, but knocked Bill Vossbrink over as if he had been a bowling pin. The onrushing figure staggered with the impact, pitched over the stack of holders that lay nearby, landed in a heap on top of the camera and the reporter.

Pinky, untouched, drew back in fright. He stared at the heap, stared at the holders. Slowly his fright faded, his stare narrowed. Something within him, never strained seriously before, snapped. For that camera, cherished friend of more than a decade, was probably ruined; that picture just taken, symbol of Pinky's and Old Eagle-eye's supreme moment of importance, was probably ruined also; Bill Vossbrink was grievously handled and Bill Vossbrink was Pinky's friend—even if only of a sort. Hadn't Bill come out to warn him?

Pinky leaped to his feet, eyes still on the heap. The heap was stirring now, for Butch Burkey was rising. Halfway to his feet, he lunged at Pinky; a glancing blow from his fist struck Pinky in the jaw, another fist struck Pinky in the nose.

And it was then that Pinky, thinking of Old Eagle-eye lying there mangled; thinking, too, of Bill Vossbrink lying beneath it, with a hoarse cry of rage, sprang.

FOR an interval which will forever be nebulous to Pinky, he fought with the horrible Butch Burkey. His long arms, really powerful, for the first time in his life drove pile-driver blows against a hated face. His hard, sinewy hands, roughened by years of dabbling in acids and developing fluids, thudded angry fists against the man he held beneath his knees. And deep within him there surged a savage, unfamiliar joy that was headier than the strong drink Mr. Joe Zicci used to purvey on these very same premises.

Pinky finally realized that his victim was limp; he stopped beating. He panted laboriously and looked around, aware of many men and flashlights. He looked up into the awed faces of the cops. He saw the open mouth of that Kirby kid and the awed stares of other reporters.

"He smashed my camera!" said Pinky.

For a moment the silence was heavy. Then a police captain cleared his throat.

"Well," he said, "he ought to be glad he didn't insult your wife!"

Pinky jumped up suddenly, hurried to the heap. The heap was stirring again. Bill Vossbrink, aided by Pinky, got to his feet.

"You all right, Mr. Vossbrink?" asked Pinky anxiously.

Bill blinked eyes that were discolored and closing; his nose was askew; his mouth was all out of shape. He squinted queerly at Pinky, at Butch, at Old Eagle-eye, and then he laughed. He clapped Pinky on the back. For Bill Vossbrink had a sense of humor. He thought it was funny, even if Pinky didn't, that Old Eagle-eye had landed

on his face.

At central police headquarters Butch Burkey sat in the detective's bureau, handcuffed and surrounded by cops, reporters, and one photographer. The photographer looked dazed.

Butch was talking. His battered face sneered.

"I'm tellin' it so you'll remember it, see? I'm tellin' it so you guys'll never have a chance to forget what a set o' boobs you are. You wondered why I never cracked at you after dark, didn't you? Well, it was because I was out o' slugs, that's why—an' you dopes sat out there an' took it!"

Butch laughed.

"I even come out on the roof o' the porch an' sat there. When that guy—" the sneer left Butch's hard face for a moment when he looked at Pinky; in its place appeared an expression of profound respect—"come walkin' up to the house for Lord knows what, I could 'a' dropped on him." He looked back at the cops. "You see, I figured you saps'd probably come bargin' up to bust the place an' I was gonna jump off an' scram when you started to break in. I damn near got away with it at that. *Bomb!*" He mocked the panicky cry that had followed Pinky's flashlight.

Pinky, standing on the fringe of the surrounding group, suddenly reached down, picked up the bundle of holders and the grip that held Old Eagle-eye and started for the door. Everybody—cops, reporters, detectives, Butch Burkey—looked after him.

"Where you going?" lisped Bill Vossbrink.

"I'm going to see if that picture's good," Pinky called back.

Pinky walked into the city room of the *Globe* several weeks later and strolled between the typewriters toward Ed Sullivan's desk. It was the first time he had been around since two weeks before, when, before an applauding crowd, he had been handed $25,000, the total in rewards for the capture of Butch Burkey, eminent public enemy, dead or alive. It was the first time, too, that he had been around since Ed Sullivan had appointed him chief photographer for the *Globe*. Tommy, said Ed Sullivan, was a smart aleck anyway, and besides that, he wasn't so good; there was no quality in his pictures like there was in Pinky's. That picture of the cops charging Butch Burkey was the best he ever had seen, said Ed. Tommy, he also said, might stay home and weigh his baby every day now, if he liked.

There had been much speculation in the city room of the *Globe* as to what Pinky would do with the $25,000. Everybody said that he probably would buy a new suit. But Pinky, strolling down the room, still had on his clothes of several colors. There was audible surprise at this, but if Pinky heard, he gave it no heed. He walked up to Ed Sullivan's desk. Bill Vossbrink, his face almost healed, but still a bit bruised, sat with the editor.

"Hello, Red!" they said in unison.

Pinky spoke, sat down on Ed Sullivan's desk.

"What you going to do with all that dough?" asked Ed.

"Well," said Pinky, "I'm giving the wife and kids a trip. Then I'm going to get a tripod and carriage for Old Eag—for my camera. The rest goes in Government bonds."

He looked importantly at Ed Sullivan and Bill Vossbrink. He grinned at Bill Vossbrink.

"How they coming, Bill?" he asked.

He leaned over and clapped the reporter familiarly on the shoulder, keenly aware of the eyes of the office. Then, reaching into his pocket, he pulled out a pipe, not a corncob, but a straight grained French brier of foreign make that must have cost him at least ten dollars. Next he took out a pouch, a handsome affair of tooled leather with a silver zipper.

Ed Sullivan and Bill Vossbrink watched him curiously. So did the rest of the office. When he had filled the pipe, Pinky turned again to Vossbrink. He thrust out the open pouch.

"Some 'baccy, Bill?" he asked.

Cinema Night

By JAMES W. BENNETT

IF it were possible—and God forbid such a possibility—to take an evening in Tahiti, arrest it, carry it to another hemisphere, embalm and display it in some natural history museum under a Latin caption, I would be tempted to choose Cinema Night as typical of the "enchanted islands".

I left Louvina's Hotel early one Cinema Night. I wanted to avoid one of those hastily made up parties of half inebriated foreigners who went to the motion pictures to scoff—and remained to the bitter end, jeering more and more loudly. Instead, I planned to ask a Tahitian fisherman to accompany me. But when I arrived at his hut, I found it dark and deserted.

Disappointed, I returned to the main road. The sun had set at least two hours before, yet the Chinese shops were still open. The Oriental does Tahiti's merchandizing. The French are too jealous of their position as conquerors of the islands to lower themselves to trade, while the Tahitians are far too lazy to compete with the hard working Cantonese.

These shops were an unholy temptation to me, one not to be resisted. What could be more fascinating than packets of pins piled neatly alongside carved soapstone Lohans, those messengers of the gods? Or bolts of gaudy cloth—bearing a Manchester stamp—to be made into the Tahitian skirt, the *pareau*, on the same counter with packages of Dragon Well Tea and boxes of blue Foochow lacquer. I was waited upon by smiling little men who still wore their hair in queues.

In the rear of each shop, but in plain view, was a shrine. It housed either the spirit tablet of the philosopher Kong—known to the Occident as Confucius—or a small gilded image of Gautama Buddha. Before the shrine red candles flickered and sticks of pressed sandalwood sent lazy whorls of aromatic smoke circling to the sooty roof timbers.

One shop, however—the main Chinese emporium—was closed. On the barred door—another Oriental touch, for the Tahitians bar or lock no doors—was pinned a sign. It was written in garbled French which I managed to translate:

> Close. Have go to dancing photographs. Goodby. See you tomorrow
>
> —LOK TAM-YING

Thus reminded of my own purpose to see the photographs which danced, I resisted further temptation. Hurrying my footsteps, I was soon at the fountainhead of Tahiti's silent drama . . .

The section roped off for the conquering Caucasians could not have been more than fifteen feet from the screen—evidently a hold-over from the days when the front rows of the orchestra offered a coign of vantage for the audible drama. The effect was to throw the films totally out of focus.

I peered back of me, quite willing to lose face with my French neighbors by joining the Tahitian contingent in order to see the pictures undistorted. But I could discover no crack or cranny left vacant; the rear of the auditorium was one solid block of natives.

The films were of a strange, bygone era. They stirred memories of my boyhood, particularly of a night in a public park where, on a great sheet of canvas,

several thousand of us viewed the world's newest marvel, the pictures that moved and took on a semblance of life. That night, we had watched a conjuror perform tricks which were manifestly impossible even for an artist in legerdemain—thanks to the superimposing of one film upon another. And that had been followed by a reel of stupid clowning . . . And here, years later, was the same trick photography, the same dreadful flicker, the same crass buffoonery.

The film lacked a story, or even a semblance of continuity. Yet it delighted the Tahitians behind me. They offered vociferous praise at every curve of a flying custard pie. Never have I heard such audible approval expressed, such wholehearted delight. As the slapstick thwacked against invitingly upturned posteriors—male and female—the applause took on such a thunderous quality that it became painful to the eardrums.

As the fun worked up to a climax of sorts with more custard pies sailing, more bottoms buffeted, the audience began to reel in their seats. I turned completely away from the picture to watch them.

Seven or eight rows behind me I saw my fisherman. He was weeping, feebly pounding his broad chest and uttering hoarse, crowing noises. Then, even as I watched, his wife, a rotund young woman shaking like jelly with laughter, suddenly gave a gasp and collapsed across his knees.

The sight sobered, even frightened me. But not so my fisherman. Matter-of-factly he stood up, slung his spouse over his shoulder and carried her to the exit. As he went his face was turned back toward the film and was still convulsed with merriment. A few moments later both returned, the wife on her own feet and evidently willing to risk another fainting spell.

No one paid the slightest heed to them. In fact, several others of both sexes were dragged or carried away in a more or less comatose condition—to be revived by the fresher air outside and the absence of this provocative film comedy.

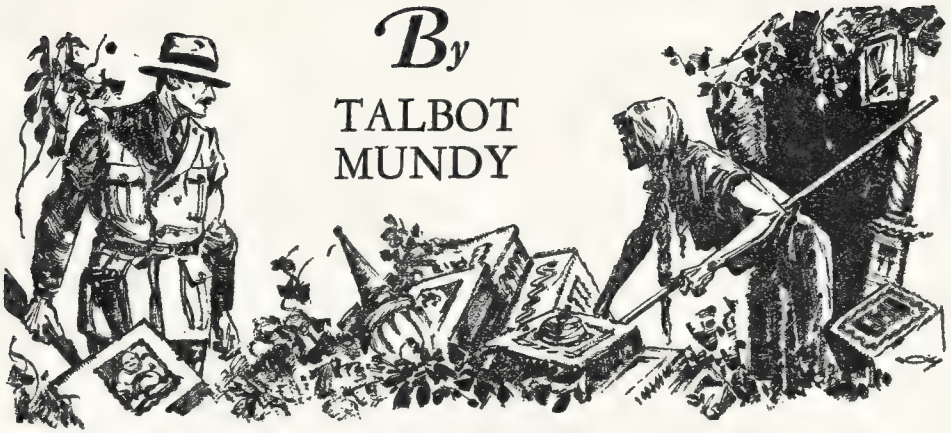
At the conclusion of the performance I left the theater, almost alone. The audience of Tahitians was electing to stay for the next showing of the reel. I haven't the slightest doubt that they would have stopped there all night, had the exhibitor seen fit to repeat the film that long.

I walked along the rim of the beach, gratefully breathing in air that had not been drained of its oxygen. While I had been indoors the moon had risen. Now it hung over the harbor, honey colored and unbelievably gorgeous. It flung a coruscant mantle across the water; it touched with lavish gold leaf the tips of the rustling coco-palms that fringed the strand.

On the reef some fishermen with flares were hunting the succulent squid. They dazzled the eyes of the luckless octopi with the light, then thrust swiftly down with steel tipped, bamboo spears . . .

Stealing across the water came the music of voices chanting in unison, emanating apparently from a hut far down the harbor's rim. The chant, sung by half a dozen voices, was rhythmic, almost heartbreaking in its persistent minor. God alone knew how old the music was; certainly the singers did not. But they must have known instinctively that it was the perfect expression for this moon suffused, perfumed night. A night carved from eternity expressly for song, for the easy yet passionate lovemaking of Tahiti, unhampered by straightlaced Occidental creeds.

The moon, the red flares on the reef, the ancient tribal chant—in that moment, at least, the Tahitian had triumphed over his French invaders, over the swift, encroaching rush of modern civilization. For that tiny space of time, Tahiti was again his—his by right of fitness, as overlord of its supreme beauty.



By
TALBOT
MUNDY

Continuing

C. I. D.

The Story Thus Far:

THE British C.I.D—Criminal Investigation Department—sent Chullunder Ghose, their preposterously fat but clever operative, to the native Indian state of Kutchdullub, where things were in such a mess that the English Resident, Major Smith, could not cope with the situation.

A man-eating tiger was terrorizing the countryside from its lair in a ruined jungle temple. It was thought by the natives that the fierce killer was controlled by a priestess, called Soonya. By right of precedent the rajah should have shot the brute, thus removing the menace from his subjects. But the rajah, a dissipated spendthrift, was unholy in the eyes of the priests because he refused to purify himself by expensive ritual; therefore he could not defile the temple by entering it. The rajah was afraid to provoke the priests further, because already they were secretly working to have him supplanted by his cousin. To forestall this the rajah, on his part, was endeavoring to have his kinsman poisoned.

It would have been a simple matter for Chullunder Ghose to detail some one to go forth quietly and shoot the tiger. But he knew the natives would rise against British rule if it presumed to meddle in an affair touching upon their religion and hereditary ruler. It was a matter for the priests and the rajah to settle. So Chullunder Ghose sought the friendship of an American doctor, Stanley Copeland, who greatly desired to shoot a tiger. The fat babu hinted that such an opportunity might soon be forthcoming.

Meanwhile Major Smith, who feared Chullunder Ghose might solve the problem and get credit for it, had sent for Syed-Suraj, the treacherous satellite of the rajah.

"Something must be done about that tiger," said Smith.

"What, though?" returned Syed-Suraj. "Only the rajah is privileged to shoot tigers that molest the people. If he goes to that temple, he defiles it because he is unclean. Then the priests, who want his cousin on the throne, will denounce him."

"REMEMBER," Syed-Suraj went on, "that the rajah, from the high church viewpoint, is in a state of gross impurity that he refuses to correct by proper ritual and sacrifice. It would be a scandalous act for him to cross the threshold, even of a sacred ruin, no matter for what reason. There would be riots. He might get killed—that's almost probable, there are so many fanatics who have been stirred up by the propaganda."

"Whose propaganda? The priests'?"

"You bet. They are masters at it. And what will happen if he does not shoot the tiger? They will say, not only that he neglects his duty, but that the tiger is sent as a curse from the angry

gods because he broke his promise to rebuild that ruin in the jungle. And he can't rebuild it, even if he cared to, since he has no money. Consequence—even worse rioting!"

"Dammit, perhaps I'd better go and shoot that brute myself," said Smith.

"But if you do, my friend, you will end your career in a hornets' nest, instead of being decorated for discretion."

"What do you suggest?" Smith asked him.

"I don't know. It has occurred to me that possibly you might—ah—let us say intuitively guess the—ah—British attitude toward the rajah's cousin. Should he come to the throne fortuitously, then, of course, the priests would get rid of the tiger. They'd poison the brute."

Smith was horrified. He was as capable of treachery as any other nerveless, self-important bureaucrat; but minor treachery—nothing heroic—nothing that might involve him in a nine-day tempest in a teapot at the close of his career. He had a genius for minor treachery. Already he was shaping in his mind a full report of this strictly private conversation, to be sent to Delhi, where it would do Syed-Suraj no good. But now he thought of something better. He could kill two birds with one stone, and retain his own reputation for tact.

"It's as simple as most problems are when you face them," he answered. "I can see no reason to take official cognizance of this. But take my compliments to his Highness, and suggest to him that he should send that fellow Hawkes to shoot the tiger. I am told Hawkes is an excellent shot."

Syed-Suraj threw up his hands and looked shocked.

"But sacrilege—"

"Yes, certainly. He can blame Hawkes, and dismiss him—pack him off home to England. Hawkes was in here not two hours ago. I had to reprimand him for trying to interfere in what was none of his business. I can testify that Hawkes is an incorrigible meddler."

"Hawkes has a contract—"

"He can be dismissed for cause," Smith answered. "Use tact. Warn his Highness to be careful how he instructs Hawkes. That's all."

CHAPTER VII

"A wise rat leaves a sinking ship."

FROM the British Residency, where a Union Jack drooped dismally on a pole, from which sun and then rain had flaked most of the paint, to the rajah's palace, where chilled and disgusted sepoys stood on guard before the pretentious iron gate, was a mile and a half. There was an avenue of trees, then winding cobbled streets—a maze of narrow fronted, mostly two-storied houses with flat roofs, built around tiny courtyards in which the hot-weather life of the city was lived. But during the monsoon most of the life was indoors, where it grew shrill and irritable—overcrowded.

In the center of the city was a spaciously conceived oasis of four paved quadrangles. One faced the palace; another the temple of Kali; the third was mainly occupied by shops belonging to the more successful merchants; and the fourth square was a marketplace. Normally the latter hummed with chaffering and stank of cabbage, onions and spice; but in the monsoon it was a waste of bluish gray cement on which sheets of rain rippled. Around three sides of it there was a stucco colonnade, beneath which were the shops, half shuttered now to keep the draft out, of the dealers of corn, enamelware and all the cheap stuff that peasants delight in. There, also, was the store of Ram Dass, dealer in mortgages, money and grain. It had yellow painted shutters. It occupied eight whole arches of the colonnade.

Wheeled traffic was not allowed in that square, and the prohibition was enforced by steps and a row of ancient iron cannons set three feet apart with their muzzles downward along the side of the square that opened to the main street. So even rajahs had to walk if they should wish to visit Ram Dass, and a rajah's confidential man-o'-dirty-work was under the same necessity. Syed-Suraj had to leave the rajah's silver plated Rolls-Royce standing in the street and mince amid the puddles under a big umbrella held for him by the liveried footman. He hated, as much

as a cat, to get his little feet wet. And he hated to wait in the drafty shop. But Ram Dass kept him waiting—sent out word that he was being treated for lumbago by a doctor and could not come until the torture was over.

Ram Dass was a comfortably fat, gray bearded veteran with twinkling eyes, who no more had lumbago than he had melancholia. There was nothing whatever wrong with him, or with his bank account. Voluminously clothed in clean white cotton and the little round cap of a *bunnia*, he sat crosslegged on a pile of corn sacks, with a kerosene stove beside him, on which a kettle sang cheerfully. In front of him, on an upturned empty box, there was a teapot, sugar, cream, two teacups and a silver case of cigarets. Beyond that wholly satisfactory and swankless table, on another pile of corn sacks, equally contented sat Chullunder Ghose.

"If they think you are dead," said Ram Dass, "they will presently unthink it. You are about as easy to disguise as an elephant. Some one must have seen you enter my shop. You are well known. And as soon as the rajah learns about you there will be an accident."

Chullunder Ghose smiled and sipped tea. Then he helped himself to an expensive cigaret.

"The god of accidents," he remarked, and blew the sweet smoke through his nose, "is a respecter of persons. Self am favorite. You ascertain the odds as soon as possible, and bet on this babu."

"I never bet."

"No? How many rupees have you lent his Highness?"

"Only five thousand. I took his note for ten. I agreed to lend another five—same terms, same interest—provided I receive the contract to supply grain for the elephants for five years. Syed-Suraj waits outside there with the contract."

"You believe this rajah will continue on the throne for five years?" asked Chullunder Ghose. "For a man of affairs, you are credulous—credulous. Pour me more tea. Any rioting yet?"

"No, none yet. This is bad weather for rioting. But there will be unless some one kills that tiger. Priests are stupid; they have overdone it this time, and they don't know how to back down. As if the rajah would care that their tiger eats a hundred people! That will only react on the priests when people wake up. Then what?"

"Let us interview the jackal."

"In here?"

"Why not? But why throw away your money?"

Syed-Suraj was admitted. A discreet clerk bore a chair in front of him and set it where the light would fall straight on its occupant's face. That made it clear to Syed-Suraj he was not an equal. The democracy of corn sacks was denied to him—he was a mere ambassador from a throne, looked up to from the corn sacks with contempt. He stared hard at Chullunder Ghose.

"You surprise me," he said.

The babu winked at him.

"Some one else," he said, "will be more surprised. What shall he do with the *corpus delicti?* Is it found yet?"

"Oho! So you killed a man?"

"I?" said the babu. "If I did, do you suppose that I would tell you?"

"But you more than hinted."

The babu stared at him.

"A wise rat leaves a sinking ship," he answered. "Take that bait and meditate it."

SYED-SURAJ produced one of his own cigarets and cupped his hands around a match to hide his face a moment while he controlled its expression. Then he turned to Ram Dass.

"Do I get that money?"

"No," said Ram Dass.

Syed-Suraj stared from face to face. Chullunder Ghose spoke swiftly before Ram Dass could put another word in.

"You know something, don't you? Why not tell us?"

Syed-Suraj dropped the cigaret and set his heel on it. He laid his hands on his knees and faced the babu. He grinned like a cat.

"I have no news. I was at the Residency. Smith was as usual—futile. If you want information," he added, "you will have to play fair. Is the net out for me, too?"

"No," the babu answered.

"But the C.I.D—?"

"I never heard of that. What is it?" asked the babu.

"Cursed Inquisitive Dog Department!"

"All right, I shall have to ask Smith what you talked about. If he won't tell me, I will tell *him*. Did he send for you to talk about the weather? What is there for him and you to talk about but his Highness, the priests and a tiger?"

"I believe you have spoken with Smith," said Syed-Saraj.

"Your beliefs are unimportant." Chullunder Ghose blinked at him. "But your brains are. I am giving you a chance to use them."

Syed-Suraj stared a minute at the oil stove. He looked at Ram Dass, but the merchant was stroking a black cat that had laid a dead mouse on the sacks beside him.

"Clever pussy! Fool mouse ran the wrong way, did he?"

Ram Dass tossed the mouse into a corner and the cat leaped after it.

Syed-Suraj drew a folded contract from his inner pocket, crackled it to attract attention, and then tore it to pieces.

"Neither of us is a fool," he said then. "Let us exchange confidences."

He was interrupted. A turbaned clerk came in to announce that Hawkes sahib wished to speak to Ram Dass.

"Ask him to be good enough to wait. Be sure to give him a cigar," said Ram Dass, and the clerk went out again.

Syed-Suraj assumed a rather bored expression. He appeared to have thought of a bright idea, and to wish to hide its newness; he was conscious that the bright, mild eyes of Chullunder Ghose were studying him—smiling.

"Well, it was, as you say, about the tiger," he began. "I went for an informal conversation. Smith seemed worried about the rajah's difficulties, and at last he asked me my opinion. So I gave it. I suggested that he should shoot the tiger. He objected, so I offered an alternative. I told him to ask Hawkes to do it. That ought to solve the problem. Hawkes can be the scapegoat afterward."

"Does Smith pay Hawkes?" asked Ram Dass.

"No. The State of Kutchdullub pays Hawkes, and that is an important point. Hawkes might refuse. But you got Hawkes his job, Chullunder Ghose; so why don't you ask him to shoot the tiger? He would listen to you, and you would get the credit with the C.I.D. for having saved a nasty situation."

But the babu grinned.

"No, you should have the credit. You may need it. You tell Hawkes. I will add my influence."

"Then I will tell him now," said Syed-Suraj. He glared at Ram Dass. "Fools and their money," he said, "are hard to separate."

Then he bowed with mock respect to both men and went out, shutting the door behind him.

"Well, that settles it," said Ram Dass. "You may save a situation, as he calls it. But you have also saved a monster on a throne that he defiles every day of the week. You have probably condemned the rajah's cousin to a painful death by poison. You have certainly sacrificed Hawkes—and you have cost me a contract. I don't think you are so clever."

"Clever?" said the babu. "I am superstitious. I believe in devils. I believe I know them when I see them. Don't keep Hawkes too long."

Ram Dass went into the shop and presently led Hawkes in, looking curiously like a London Bobby in his long black waterproof with the hood drawn up over his head. He was wholesome. As he pushed the hood back and his eyes grew used to the gloom amid piled-up corn sacks he stared hard at Chullunder Ghose—grinned and held his hand out.

"You—you damned old son of a gun! Say, when did you blow in? And why not my house? Damn—I'd sooner see you than a pay raise! Remember last time you and I got drunk together? It's about time for an encore."

"What is new?" the babu asked him.

"Nothing. Same old round of checking up and finding fault. Yes, there is, though—hey, the sight o' you'd make a man forget his mother. Have you heard o' the tiger that's killing and eating 'em, over beyond the river?"

"I have seen that tiger," said the

babu. "I have come from there. I saw it kill a man."

"Trust you to know everything! Smith as good as called me a liar today for reporting it. Wasn't Syed-Suraj in here? Do you trust him? He buttonholed me as he went out—said he had the rajah's orders to instruct me to go after the brute tomorrow morning. Do you think that's on the level?"

"On about three levels," said the babu. "What did you say?"

"Me? I asked for it in writing."

"Hawkes, you are much too sane to do me any credit! You should have been the Unknown Soldier! Take an elephant and start tomorrow morning."

"Do you mean that?"

"But you must not shoot the tiger!"

"What's the idea?"

"You must find out for me how they keep a tiger in a ruined temple and persuade it to return when it has finished hunting. When you have found that out, wait for instructions."

"You've the call on me," said Hawkes. "I can't say no to you. You know that."

"Some men can forget more easily than you do, Hawkes. Can you get word to Syed-Suraj? Ask to see him. Say you didn't understand him. Ask him to repeat the conversation. Then agree to start tomorrow. And then do it. But as one friend to another, kindly, please, don't kill the tiger, even if he bites you! I require him."

"Alive?"

"Yes, and gnashful! Teeth, tail, talons and a nasty disposition!"

"Won't you tell me what the game is?"

"Hawksy, I would tell you anything, if only you weren't honest. Wait until afterward. But bring back word and tell me all that happens."

"O.K, since it's you, old trusty."

"And if any one should meet you, Hawksy, who can tell his own number and mine too, trust him just as far as you would trust me."

Hawkes stuck his hands in his pockets and whistled.

"Something doing! O.K. My insurance policy is paid up."

"Hurry," said the babu. "Go and talk to Syed-Suraj."

CHAPTER VIII

"You're too great a liar to ride on a decent elephant."

THE head mahout was angrier than even the monsoon weather justified.

"Ten thousand devils take that Hawkiss-ee! Now he gets up in darkness to punish the sun if it rises late. See him look at his watch, that he doubtless stole from some one! Hurry—hurry—hurry!"

Hawkes was surprised but not offended to discover that a sly eyed villager from beyond the river wished to ride with him. The fellow had a big new knife in an embossed sheath and was inordinately proud of it. He also had a chit from the babu—just a scrap of paper with the words, "Please take him. —C. G."

"Up you get. You'll need a blanket. Here, take this one. Keep it."

It was ragged, but the hole in the middle would do to stick a fellow's head through. It established, in the mind of the villager, the opinion that Hawkes was a wealthy profligate from whom important favors might be coaxed, if he were suitably managed. The question being how to manage him, he sat silent at the rear of the howdah, remembering all the tales he had ever heard about a white man's blind obedience to unknown laws. He naturally got them badly mixed up; it seldom happens that a naked plowman from a mud-and-wattle village by a jungle understands an Englishman, however hard he tries to. But he can try.

The elephant squelched through the mud and enjoyed it. His belly and his legs became a slimy, comfortable mess that did not dry and cake off; the rain, that had lessened a bit and had warmed since yesterday, streamed down his sides in rivulets and kept the paste thin. The mahout was miserable, since he had to face the rain; but he did not dare to vent his temper on the animal, because he knew Hawkes's strange objection to the habit. Hawkes smoked, with a hand over his pipe to keep the rain from drowning the tobacco.

On the left was jungle, on the right

an endless waste of water, reaching to the skyline, that would presently be plowed fields when the flood subsided. Far ahead were mountains, curtained by pearly mist that sometimes, when the wind grew squally, let the sun through and presented sudden vistas of green and gold forested ranges. There was not a human to be seen, until the villager grunted to call Hawkes's attention and Hawkes saw four men in the khaki uniform of state constabulary, staggering along through knee-deep mud toward them.

They were carrying a litter made of poles. A man, who was not in uniform, lay on it. They set the litter down and waited for the elephant, and as it drew near two of the men walked out into the road—looking determined—pulling down their tunics and squaring their shoulders to show authority.

"Halt!" one of them commanded. "Here we have a corpse. It must be taken to Kutchdullub."

"Do you mistake me for an undertaker?" Hawkes asked.

There was neither love nor admiration lost between him and the state constabulary. He regarded them as blackmailing bullies, in league with criminals and eager to be bribed by any one. They sullenly resented him as an alien who had no right to criticize, but who did it bluntly and without that tolerance that men who drew the rajah's pay should feel for one another.

"Who is he?" Hawkes asked.

"One of us. He was on plainclothes duty. We were on patrol and found him lying near here, raving, with a cracked skull."

"Could he talk sense?" Hawkes asked.

"Not until shortly before he died. Then he spoke of a cart. But if there was one, then the rain has washed away the marks of it. And he spoke of a man in the dark, who struck him as they stood together talking near the cart-tail."

From the howdah Hawkes stared at the muddied corpse on the litter beside the road. He observed an empty holster.

"Where is his revolver?" he demanded.

"Missing. Whoever struck him took it away from him and fled."

"What did the assailant look like? Did he tell you?"

"No; he said he couldn't see him in the darkness. He could only say a few words. Then he grew delirious again and soon died."

"Was he on patrol, too? Why was he alone? You plunderers always hunt in couples, when there aren't a dozen of you. What was he doing?"

"Secret duty."

"Dirty work, eh? Why are you patrolling?"

"We were looking for him."

"That so? You expected trouble, did you?"

SILENCE. Surly glances from the four men, then a sour grin from the spokesman. Hawkes stared again at the litter as it lay in the road.

"What have you underneath that sacking?" He could see the edge of a shovel. "You look like a burial party to me."

The villager in the howdah interrupted.

"It was a priest who did it," he said suddenly in Hawkes's ear.

One of the policemen overheard him.

"Come down here, you!"

"Stay where you are," Hawkes ordered. "Tell your story."

Fame! A pulpit! Oratory from a rajah's elephant!

"It happened this-wise, sahibs. Having lost my old knife, I must get a new one. Therefore I swam the river and set forth on foot to Kutchdullub. There rode a priest in a cart, and I sought to overtake the cart, being minded to ask the favor of a ride into the city, as was not unreasonable. Many a time that priest has drunk our cow milk at the village, it being he who brings the he-goats for the temple sacrifice."

"What temple?"

"That one that lies in ruins in the jungle."

"Sacrifices?"

"Once a week that priest brings seven goats, all he-ones. There is a daily sacrifice. However, we of the village offer no goats, since a tiger slays too many of them, so we told the priests to—"

The constable swore impatiently to keep the story within limits.

"Tell what happened."

"Thus it happened. As I overtook the cart—it labored in the deep mud, sahibs—that one who lies dead came forth from the jungle suddenly. He did not see me, but I saw him. And I feared him. So I crouched in darkness. I heard him say he would ride in the cart. But the priest said nay to that. For they are thrice-born swaggerers, those priests. They fear a man's touch, notwithstanding that the Lord Mahatma Gandhi teaches—"

"To the lowest hell with Gandhi! Tell what happened."

"But I do tell. He began to climb into the cart, holding his revolver thus. But the priest had a light—a peculiar one, like a stick, that he flashed into the man's face. By that light I saw the priest's hand hold a club and strike the man twice on the top of the head. So he fell. And he dropped his revolver. So the priest got down and, groping for it, found it. He flung it away. I heard it fall into a pool of water. Then the priest returned into the cart. I heard him command the driver to go forward. And, being frightened, I ran. The cart was heavy and the mud deep. Therefore I reached Kutchdullub far ahead of it. I bought my new knife. And because I enjoy the special favor of the ruler of the land, I now return home on a royal elephant."

"Get off the elephant before I drag you down," the policeman commanded. "You may tell that story, or another version of it, at the *kana*."

But the villager appealed to Hawkes, in silence eloquent with gesture. Hawkes knew as well as the villager did what tortures they would give him in a dark cell, to induce him to tell a lot more than he knew and to edit his story to suit police convenience. It was not his business, but he had Chullunder Ghose's note; he felt he might be letting the babu down somehow if he failed to interfere now.

"Go to hell," he answered. "I'm in charge o' this man. Two of you had better hunt for that revolver that he says the priest threw away. If you find it, it'll be evidence. One of you stand by the corpse, and let the fourth man hurry to Kutchdullub for assistance."

"Nay, nay. That is the rajah's elephant. We will ride home on it."

"That so? *Cheloh!*" Hawkes commanded.

The mahout knew better than to disobey Hawkes. The elephant resumed his squelching through the mud. Rain came down again in torrents. Hawkes sat silent, with his coat up to his ears until the squall ceased. Then he turned his head abruptly.

"You're a liar," he said to the villager. "If a word of what you told is true, you'd have held your tongue for fear of being held as a witness."

"Nay, I spoke truth."

"Get down and walk then. Swing yourself down by the elephant's tail and go with the policemen."

"Is the sahib angry that the priests should eat a little trouble? They have made enough of it for other people. They have said their tiger only slays the wicked. So our village has become a byword, and other men mock us to our faces. Nobody will slay that tiger for us, and the priests say—"

"Cut it short now. Who did kill the police spy?"

"Nay, I know not."

"You invented all that yarn? Then down you get and go back. You're too big a liar to ride on a decent elephant."

"But is the sahib not the friend of him who sent me with the chit? And if the sahib's friend should be accused of slaying some one, would the sahib like that?"

Hawkes stared.

"I am a poor man," said the villager. "I thought, if I should save the sahib's friend from accusation, then the sahib possibly might give this humble person a reward."

Hawkes continued to stare.

"Did you see the man killed?" he demanded. "Did you see who did it?"

"Yes, but no matter. I have turned the blame on to those bloody-minded Brahmins. If the sahib should give me fifty rupees, I could hide among the mountains until it is time to plow. And for a hundred I could stay away all Summer."

Hawkes spat.

"Not a rupee."

"But the sahib has an old coat. It is tied up in the roll of bedding that is under the tarpaulin."

"You stay by me," Hawkes retorted. "If I get a good report about you from the babu you shall have what's right."

"But if he lies about me? All babus are liars."

Hawkes stuck his pipe in his teeth, carefully lighted it, puffed a few times and then leaned back against the bedding roll.

"If you think that about him," he suggested, "the elephant keeps his tail at that end. Use it. I'll look straight ahead until we're past that big tree on the left hand."

"Nay, nay," said the villager. "That babu said I am to ride free all the way to the village."

Hawkes stuck his hands in his overcoat pockets and whistled softly to himself. The villager did not like that, because it is well known that to whistle softly summons evil spirits; so he hummed a little nasal mantra said to disagree with evil spirits, and sat meditating—wondering why sahibs are so complicated and unable to discern the simplest way of solving awkward riddles.

CHAPTER IX

"Each state for itself—
to hell with the rest!"

THE rajah had plenty of spies; so he knew very well that the C.I.D. had been investigating him. But he was reckless. Possibly he felt the applecart had run away with him.

"Tu m'embêtes!" he remarked to Syed-Suraj in the library. "A bat could tell you there's a revolution going on all over the world. It's economic, it's religious, it's scientific, and it's social. It will end in the break-up of empires—as happened to Rome, to our Moguls, and to Napoleon's half finished scheme. And then what? The survival of the fittest. Princes who are not such asses as to give a damn what other people think will come into their own again. Pour me a brandy and soda.

"India within a year or two will be a welter of what that idiot Wilson preached as self-determination—take my word for it. Each state for itself, to hell with all the others, and the English —thank God! stewing in their own grease on an island in the North Sea. All I need is to prevent the priests from getting too much power. Just now I'm letting them go too far, on purpose. Later, when the crash comes, I won't need them; they will need me. Have a drink, too? Why not?"

"It will need a clear head to—ah—to follow your line of thought," said Syed-Suraj. "I am not a statesman. But I run your errands. Wouldn't it be safer if you took me into confidence?"

"About what?"

"What have you done, for instance, that I don't know?"

"Nothing, except that I've sent a party out to bury that babu. I picked four men notorious for criminal associations. They are men who won't talk—won't dare."

Syed-Suraj blinked his bright eyes, hesitated and then changed the subject.

"Any news of your cousin?"

"Not yet. That doctor of yours from Madras is a turtle—I mean a tortoise."

"He has made a lot of money out of life insurance cases," said Syed-Suraj. "And he understands the danger of an autopsy. He's a safe man. But have you paid him?"

"Why ask? I will give him a thousand rupees of the five you got from Ram Dass. Then let him whistle. He won't dare talk."

"I'm afraid of the priests," said Syed-Suraj. "They are subtle."

"Are they? They will find themselves outsubtled! Hawkes is on his way to shoot their tiger, isn't he? I may have to fire Hawkes for a scapegoat. But what of it? There are plenty of Hawkeses. Every one will understand that the tiger trick was rather neatly turned against them. They will be laughed at. It will cost them prestige.

"What is left after that of their prestige will fall in the mud when the news breaks that my beloved cousin can't succeed me on the throne for rather concrete reasons! After that, what can they do but make their peace with me? No heir, they want the British to take over the state and run it Ghandi-

fashion—brotherhood with Christians, Sikhs and Moslems, child-marriages unlawful—caste repudiated? Not they! The priests will decide to put up with me. And they will pray for a son of my loins to inherit the throne!"

"It sounds good," said Syed-Suraj. "How about my rake-off, by the way, of the loan from Ram Dass?"

"Get the balance. Then I'll pay you."

"But he won't lend any more."

"Try him again, if you want your rake-off, as you call it. Take my car and go and see him."

But Syed-Suraj did not take the rajah's Rolls-Royce. He knew it was not the slightest use to go to Ram Dass. So he went out walking in the rain, and walked for an hour, until he found a dish faced fellow lurking in a doorway. It was a simple matter after that to find Chullunder Ghose. He was inside, in a smoke filled room, discussing politics with men who probably had never been beyond the border, and who honestly believed Kutchdullub was the center of the universe. Syed-Suraj beckoned Chullunder Ghose into the lobby.

"Am I right," he asked, looking directly at the babu, "in supposing that the C.I.D. has sent you to contrive a political change here? An important change? If so, I might help you."

"If you have anything to tell me, tell it," said the babu, scratching his big stomach, as if he kept his brains there.

Syed-Suraj grinned back, cat-wise.

"Make me an offer," he suggested.

Chullunder Ghose did make an offer —surprising and sudden.

"Get out of the state," he commanded, "and stay out."

"But I can't afford it. Can't you see, you fool, that you should use me?"

"How so?" asked the babu.

"I could get proof that some one is murdering some one."

Chullunder Ghose smiled like a seraph.

"Yes," he said, "and somebody engaged a doctor from Madras to do the murdering! You get out of the state, you jackal. Leave your royal tiger to the huntsmen!"

Syed-Suraj wilted.

"Oh, all right," he answered, "since you put it that way."

"If I catch you here tomorrow—"

"I will take tonight's train."

"Get a permit from the rajah. You may need it. And I don't care what you tell him," said the babu.

SYED-SURAJ strode out, dignified, if dignity consists in throwing up one's chin. And it is difficult to hold that pose and notice things, still more difficult if one must hold an umbrella against a rainstorm. He did not, for instance, notice the dish faced man who followed him almost as far as the palace gate. The ragged, dish faced person dodged behind a tree, six feet away, exactly at the moment when a mud bedraggled member of the state constabulary, staggering with weariness, stepped out from the shelter of that same tree and confronted Syed-Suraj.

It was squally; the constable seized the umbrella and held it to windward, protecting them both. So most of the conversation reached the man who listened. He was downwind.

"Careful, sahib! Some one, who I think is a friend of the fat babu, just now offered me ten rupees to tell what I know. I refused."

Unfortunately silver jangled in a tunic pocket, and it was certainly not pay day. However, that might be coincidence and Syed-Suraj pretended not to notice. The constable continued:

"Something went wrong. He who should have slain that babu was himself slain by a priest from Kali's temple, who was on his way from taking goats for sacrifice at that old ruin in the jungle."

"Who said that? Who knows it?"

"We four found the body. And Hawkes knows it. With Hawkes, on an elephant, is he who saw the deed done —a fool of a villager; we would have brought him here in custody, but Hawkes said no; he took the fellow with him. What now? May I have an elephant to bring the dead man to the city?"

Syed-Suraj sneered.

"How do I know? What do I care? Ask his Highness."

"He is in his *bibi-kana.* None may

summon him," said the constable.

His voice held envy or contempt, it was not easy to tell which.

"Do you expect me to enter the *zenana?*" Syed-Suraj retorted. "Wait here until you are sent for."

"I am weary, sahib."

"Constables sometimes are, they tell me. What are you paid for? Wait there."

Syed-Suraj hurried toward the palace, still not noticing the dish faced man behind the tree, who ran before the rain until he reached the doorway he had left and sat there waiting for Chullunder Ghose. He appeared to be doing, it might be, penance, wrapped up in a piece of ragged sacking.

Syed-Suraj went into the palace and demanded instant audience with the rajah.

"If he has a dozen women in his lap, I don't care! I will see him now—do you hear me? Tell him."

So in less than fifteen minutes the rajah fumed into the library, showing his teeth. He smelled of blended perfumes.

"What the devil does this mean?" he demanded.

"You," said Syed-Suraj, "and your devil are too many for me."

"Curse your impudence! I'll shoot you like a dog if you ever again dare to summon me from the *zenana!*"

"Never again, I assure you! Give me my percentage of the loan from Ram Dass."

"Ingrate! All you ever do is badger me for money!"

"Better pay me or I might talk! I'm deserting you. That's final."

"You treacherous swine!" The rajah turned his back, but watched the mirror. He opened the mirror—took out a revolver—faced about abruptly. "Dog of a traitor! What does this mean?" he demanded, walking forward.

Syed-Suraj backed away from him.

"Steady, now, steady! I've warned you often enough against your temper. Don't make matters worse by—"

"Tell me, damn you! What has happened?"

"Nothing, my good man. Nothing—oh, dear me, no!" Syed-Suraj found that tart sneer irrepressible. "I warned you. Did you listen? Not you! Now the priests know you are poisoning your cousin. Furthermore, Chullunder Ghose is alive, in the city, in touch with the priests—one of whom killed the man you sent out to murder Chullunder Ghose. Do you suppose the babu doesn't guess who ordered him killed and buried in a swamp? And what does that mean. That you have the C.I.D. against you. That is why I am going. Give me money and a travel permit."

The rajah took three steps forward.

"You desert me, eh? You propose to betray me from over the border! To my cousin? Speak, you hyena! Have you sold yourself? To whom? For how much?"

Syed-Suraj backed away again. He struck a footstool—staggered. Probably the rajah misinterpreted the sudden jerk toward him in an effort to recover balance. He raised the revolver. Panic stricken, Syed-Suraj clutched at his wrist. The rajah fired three times to summon a servant.

"Help!" he shouted. "Help! Help!" The frenzy of indignation made him forget he was using English.

Syed-Suraj, wincing as the shots smashed window glass, struck at the rajah and tried to escape before a servant could arrive. He poked two fingers at the rajah's eyes. The rajah shot him, twice, through the heart.

Then the rajah's mood changed. Languidly he turned and faced the door. It had opened. His personal servant stood there. He signed to the man to close it and come nearer. Then he stared into the servant's eyes.

"You, who saw what happened, did you see him take my revolver from the closet behind the mirror?"

The servant nodded, wide eyed, silent.

"Did you hear him threaten me? And did you see him try to shoot me, twice, as I stood between him and the window?"

The servant gravely bowed assent.

"And did you hear him boast that the priests will provide him an alibi, and pay him handsomely for killing me, because they wish my cousin on the throne?"

The servant bowed.

"And did you see me try to snatch the pistol from him? Did you see him shoot himself?"

"I saw all," said the servant. "Others saw it also. I will go and find them."

The rajah poured himself brandy and soda, smiled and drank deeply.

"Yes," he said, proud of his self-control, "bring them in. Refresh their memories. Talk with one another."

He drank another gulp of brandy—straight—and strode out, back to the *zenana.*

CHAPTER X

"Whoever it is, is as scared as I am."

THE rain ceased, but the river had risen; it poured out of the jungle with a gurgling rush that carried big trees ducking and bobbing in midstream. Men from the merchant's bivouac on the near side gathered around Hawkes and warned him that not even an elephant could cross for possibly a week to come. Hawkes, with a pipe in his mouth and a grin on his face was, British army style, incredulous.

"How," he demanded, "do the priests cross when they bring goats? Some one said they bring 'em once a week for a sacrifice in some sort of a ruined temple."

"Who knows, sahib? Some say they cross by a bridge. The people hereabouts pretend it is guarded by evil spirits. Now and then they tell the truth, those villagers."

Hawkes's village passenger had heard the conversation. He admitted that he knew there was a ruin, a tiger and a priestess. The tiger killed folk, and the priestess ate them; everybody knew that. But a bridge? He shook his head.

"How do the priests cross the river?" Hawkes asked.

"They sit on a mat, and the mat gets up and flies. But some say that the owls pick up the mat and carry it."

"That sounds probable," said Hawkes.

"Yes, much more probable. Because how could the priests make a mat fly?"

The mahout was adamant. His elephant could not possibly swim the river. He himself would rather die than ride into that jungle to look for a bridge.

"For should there be a bridge, it might not bear the elephant. And whoever heard of a bridge in a jungle? But every one has heard of evil spirits. They are bad for elephants. An elephant goes crazy, kills and smashes things when evil spirits enter him."

Hawkes gave the elephant a lump of corncake soaked in whisky, to establish confidence, and ordered the beast to hoist him up to the mahout's seat. With his legs behind the elephant's ears he urged him forward. The mahout's mind changed then. He declared his honor was at stake. He shrieked disconsolately, as a man should who for honor's sake must plunge into the midst of devils' magic. Hawkes crawled into the howdah and took his rifle from its case; but rifles are no good against devils. The mahout climbed by the elephant's knee to the elephant's neck, white eyed with terror. He demanded whisky, which is good against everything. Hawkes gave him some.

Then tank-work, such as only elephants, of all living things, can do—crushing, sliding, grinding, breaking into undergrowth, plunging through the tributaries of the river, following its course and smashing down thickets; turning aside for nothing but the big trees and the biggest boulders. Time and again the howdah and its load were almost ripped off; half a dozen times Hawkes swung by the arms from a branch of a tree to save himself from being brained. But the elephant waited for him, and they went on, mile upon gloomier mile, drenched, bitten by a million mosquitos, leaving a track behind them that a blind man could have followed, if he only were amphibian.

And at last, about four in the afternoon, the going became firmer. Limestone cropped up through the tree roots and the trees were less huge, although as dense as ever. The weary elephant appeared encouraged, as if he recognized the neighborhood of humans where a decent beast was likely to get dinner. Suddenly the river curved; it thundered down a waterfall between sheer flanks of limestone, with a fern

filled rocky island in the midst.

It was easy to see there had been a bridge there once upon a time, although its fallen masonry had long ago been swept downstream by rain fed torrents such as this one. There had been a road of some importance; some of its paving blocks, up-ended by resistless trees, stood like tombstones in the jungle.

For a bridge, now, there was nothing but a hand rope, taut across the river, and two treetrunks—from near bank to the island, island to the far bank. They were slippery with rain and only half trimmed; branches blocked the way along them. It was something that a goat or a man could tackle; for an elephant it might as well not be there. The mahout grinned, chattering with terror, but relieved because this seemed to be the limit.

Hawkes pulled out a flashlight from the bedding roll, shouldered his rifle by the sling and put some spare shells in his pocket, filled the other pocket with some chocolate and biscuits, looked to his flask and gave his orders.

"Set me down," he said, "and wait here. Feed your elephant and hunt some dry wood. If we have to make a night of it we'll need fire."

He poured all that was left of the whisky on the elephant's big, fat corn loaves. Then he started across the bridge. It was a slow job, although the rope helped; the rifle and flask slings kept catching in the half trimmed branches, and by the time he reached the island he was dizzy with exertion and with the roar of the torrent beneath him. He rested on a pile of masonry that had once formed a part of the bridge. Then he glanced back at the elephant.

He could see the mahout on the elephant's neck, and before he could think or shout the elephant was going full pelt through the jungle, back along the way he came. There was only a glimpse of him, gray as the treetrunk shadows. He, with his mahout and passenger, was gone in a second.

Hawkes shrugged his shoulders. It was no use swearing. Forward was hardly likely to be worse than backward. He could not possibly struggle back to the ford before sunset. He was dripping wet with water from the trees, and he had a wholesome dread of a night in wet clothes in the fever ridden jungle. He decided to look first for a place to spend the night. Then, if there was any time left before sunset, he would try to discover a path toward the village on the far side of the river. He was angry, but not in the least discouraged.

THE tiger, for the moment, gave him no concern whatever. With his double-barreled .557 gun and sufficient daylight he felt well able to care for himself; by nightfall he proposed to have a hot fire going that would keep any tiger away and be smoky enough to defeat the much more dangerous mosquitos.

Chullunder Ghose's curious injunction not to shoot the tiger troubled him least of all; if he had seen the tiger there and then he would have shot the brute without a moment's hesitation. But as he worked his way along the slippery treetrunk, with the hungry dark brown flood beneath him, he did wonder why the babu should have been so emphatic about it.

"Damn him, he knows me," he muttered.

Something hit him on the helmet—almost made him lose his footing. Sacred monkeys sometimes swarm amid ancient ruins; thinking of the ruins that he hoped to find, he supposed for a moment that one of the monkeys had pelted him, as they frequently do. He hurried to the far bank, scrambled to the ground and looked up at the treetops. Not a sign of monkeys. Another stone hit him a crack on the jaw.

He unslung his rifle, cocked it, stared about him and aimed at a sound. There was something moving in a thicket, or behind the thicket. He was certain it was not a tiger. Some one, who had flung that stone, was lurking—looking at him. He could feel eyes. He began to walk toward the thicket. Something or somebody scurried away, not making more noise than a furtive animal; but it was an unrecognizable noise. Elimination left no probability except that a human being was trying to scare him

back the way he came, but was afraid to be seen.

"Well, whoever it is, is as scared as I am," he reflected.

Half-light, filtering through the branches under heavy clouds, increased his nervousness. He was as dangerous then as dynamite. He would have shot at anything he saw. But he could see nothing. The trees were not nearly so dense on this side of the river, due to sheet rock that afforded only random root-hold; undergrowth was dense where it had found a lodging, but there was a fair view in all directions, except where boulders blocked the way.

Much of the undergrowth was fern, a little less than waist high, drenching wet but passable. And, winding through the fern, if not a track, at least something that faintly suggested one appeared to take an almost definite direction. Hawkes decided to follow the track.

It led away from the gloom of the jungle. It presently curved into a space of ten or fifteen acres where a fire had raged not long ago and second growth was barely knee high. Stumps and charred down-wood barred the way, but the footpath, more distinct now, wound amid them. On the right hand, sunset bathed the sky in furious crimson. On the left was a pond, an acre in extent, half filled with lotus pads and still surrounded by limestone masonry, broken but not so badly that one could not see some of the steps that once had lined the pond on all four sides. And beyond the pond, the ruined temple.

It was a tremendous heap of grim blocks, tumbled by an earthquake. Trees had rooted in the cracks. Giant creepers, flaming in the sunset, seemed to tie the mass together, as if jungle gods had drawn a net around it to preserve its shapelessness. Nothing remained of a temple, seen from outside, except one huge image, partly fallen, tilted forward and to one side, staring downward. Unimaginably held by roots and broken masonry, it grinned at its reflection in the still pool—loathsome on a blood-red mirror—cruel, calm, dispassionate. A million frogs made music to it. On its head, amid the carving of the hair, a seed had rooted and produced a drooping spray of green that made the head look drunken. And the coarse lips, and the lazy, heavy lidded eyes smiled confidently at the glutted drunkenness of death that swallows life, and even swallows death itself, and ends in nothing.

Hawkes remembered he was hungry then and ate some chocolate. There was plenty of charred wood that would make a camp-fire; there was time enough, too, to gather up a good load. Nothing for it but the ruins; he must take his chance of snakes and hunt for a nook or cranny large enough to spend the night in. He could build a fire in the entrance and dry his wet clothes. Forward!

Fifteen minutes' scramble over fallen masonry and tangled creepers brought him to a window, or what had been one. It was nothing but a shapeless dark hole, but it opened into what the flashlight revealed as a cell, about twenty feet by ten, with walls of heavily carved limestone, and so deep in bat dirt that there was no guessing what the floor was made of.

At the far end there were shadows and a broken masonry partition, but Hawkes did not stay to examine those; he went for wood. After half a dozen trips he had enough to keep a good fire going all night; so he frayed up tinder with his clasp knife, economically built his watch-fire in the middle of the hole, and set to work to clear a piece of floor to sit on, scraping away the bat filth with a piece of charred wood.

The stench turned his stomach, so he let it alone after a few minutes and decided to sit on a square block of stone that had a clean side when he turned it over. Then he pulled his clothes off and began to dry them at the fire.

So he was naked, except for his socks and boots, when something stirred, away behind him in the dark beyond the broken masonry partition. He grabbed his rifle. Then he pulled his trousers on. He listened.

He felt his trousers slipping, so he had to tighten his belt with one hand while he clutched the rifle with the other. He held the flashlight between his knees, unsteadily; the light went upward, terrifying scores of bats that were dis-

turbed enough already by the fire in the entrance. By the time he had his belt tight and the flashlight aimed again there was a woman staring at him.

She had stepped from behind the broken half wall at the far end. One could tell she was a woman by her long hair, flowing to her waist but gummed into ropes with blue mud. From her breasts, as flat as pancakes, to her knees, as gnarled as tree knots, she was covered with a goatskin apron. She had no eyebrows. Her eyes glowed sullenly from dark holes in a wrinkled face that looked as hard as bronze. Her lips seemed hardly skin-thick, tight against splendid teeth that were as yellow as amber. Beauty, that had left her as the tide leaves the barren beaches, made her terrible by hinting that it had been hers.

And another thing was terrible. Emaciated, scarred by thorn and weather, she stood straight as a spear and as strong as an Amazon. Life had not left her; it lingered and burned in a scarred mask. And she looked as if she hated the life that rioted in sinewy, strong loneliness, and gave her nothing.

"Cheerio," said Hawkes. "I've chocolate and biscuit. Come and have some."

No answer. He repeated the invitation in Hindustani.

"Come on, mother. Come and share supper with me. I'll forgive you for hitting my jaw with a rock. It was you. No use lying. Who else could have done that?"

Again no answer. But she beckoned, holding a long stick like a spear in her left hand, motioning with her right arm stretched out full length, four upturned fingers summoning.

"All right, mother. I can lick you," he remarked. "I'll follow."

She turned on her heel, and from behind she was as splendid as a statue of youth, with the goatskin loosely drawn around her and nothing but the long blue ropes of hair to hint at old age. The muscles of her back, as she moved, were ripples in the flashlight.

"Hell—I wonder could I lick you?" Hawkes thought. But with his thumb he set the safety catch of his rifle. "I'd hate to shoot a woman! Why not stay here?"

But he followed.

CHAPTER XI

"You'll be back when it's over!"

STANLEY COPELAND suddenly —as such things happen—saw that he had bitten off a mouthful that a dozen of him could hardly have chewed. He was getting no rest, and the Sikh was as tired as himself.

"Say, you and I are like the old lady who tried to sweep back the Atlantic with a house broom," he said.

The Sikh stared wide eyed at him, equally enthusiastic, equally conscious of human limits, but guiltily aware of a waiting list of crippled, maimed and sick who had responded to the call of naive propaganda.

"We're like Germany; we need a moratorium," said Copeland. "You and I are just snowballs in hell, that's what we are. Next thing, both of us will go sick. Nurse each other, I suppose, eh?"

"But I have some very interesting cases for you," said the Sikh apologetically. "I am even hoping to bring you a leper."

"The devil you are! You may not believe it, Kater Singh, but what I crave now is strong drink and a tiger. I'm sick of patching cripples. I want to kill something. Philanthropy palls. If you brought me a really rare eye, I could walk out on you. That's the plain truth."

"God relieves the overburdened," the Sikh quoted piously.

And that was also true, apparently, because the door opened without a knock, that instant. The Sikh scowled, not so positively sure of God's benevolence as speech might indicate. Copeland turned about and faced Chullunder Ghose, the omni-impudent, the all-observing, genial and fat to look at in his English shooting jacket and his homespun loincloth.

"Don't you like it?" he asked, lifting the loincloth like a ballet girl's skirt. He did a caricature of Pavlowa. "It is my concession to Mahatma Gandhi. All things in their turn to all men—not too much, though, or they love you, and their love is dreadful."

"Drink?" suggested Copeland.

"You will go far. Never have I seen a swifter diagnosis. Eighty per cent of

diagnoses—so says Osler—are inaccurate, but yours is *verb. sap.* to the ultimate dimension! Let me warn you, whisky is forbidden by the Sikh religion. Order, therefore, three drinks. We will drink ours swiftly to preserve him from the sin of voting too dry and becoming too wet."

Copeland produced the whisky bottle and his servant brought the glasses and siphon. They drank in silence, then Copeland set his glass down.

"I'd forgotten what it tastes like."

"Same here," said the babu. "And the sun is shining. Your eyes assure me you have forgotten what that looks like. Come and see it. Twenty million miles of mud—and only one macadam road in all Kutchdullub! But it leads you to the city, and it starts here. I've a Ford car."

"How about a permit?" Copeland asked. "I've had a formally polite but firm communication from the Foreign Office calling my attention to section so-and-so of Order in Council No. Umpty-um restricting the movement of aliens into native states."

"Did it mention boils?" Chullunder Ghose asked. "Boils on the back of a bachelor's neck—of a hypochondriacal bachelor's neck—of a white babu's neck—an officially dignified and economically useless, ethically hypocritical anachronism's neck? I think not. Circumstances alter cases. I could do the job as well as you can, with a safety razor blade. But dignity would call that impudence. Besides, I need a mouse to help me nibble at the nets of Humpty-dumpty on a rocking-horse. He rocks like hell, I tell you. One shove—and we shall have his alternative, probably worse, undoubtedly not much better, but different. That is nature. Work with nature, same as Osler ordered. Are you coming?"

"You bet. Coming where? Do I get the tiger?"

"Yes, unless he gets you."

"Frighten me later on," said Copeland. "You have pulled my cork. I'm coming." He grinned at the Sikh. "You'll have enough to keep you busy till I come back. Keep all those eyes in the dark, if you can, and remember what I showed you about draining deep wounds. Go slow with iodoform, and don't let 'em change their own dressings. I'll be back—when?"

"Then!" the babu answered. "When it's over. When a major has been recommended for a decoration, and when you and I have received our reprimand! Observe my belly; it is obese with reprimands. The walls of my wife's bathroom in her home in Delhi are adorned with fifty of them, framed in pale pink. Let us go now."

CHAPTER XII

"The devil quotes Scripture, sahib."

MAJOR EUSTACE SMITH, in a sweater and blazer with a scarf around his neck that gave him almost the appearance of a rowing man, paced the tiled veranda, pausing at frequent intervals to glare into the Residency garden. He had to turn his whole body in order to do it, because the boils on the back of his neck were in the sharply painful stage. The garden offered no encouragement; it was a drab, wet, dreary wilderness of half neglected flowers ruined by the rain. The sun had burst forth through the brown-gray clouds, but nothing welcomed it except the weeds.

"Curse and damn my luck!" Smith exploded. "Why the devil is that fat brute taking all this time to bring a doctor? Murder now to deal with—palace murder—with a little less than three months more to go before leaving India forever. Damn that rajah! Damn and blast him for a skunk in velvet! Does he think this is Chicago? To avoid a scandal I shall have to accept whatever lies he cares to trump up. But for twopence, if I had my own way, I would hang him, dammit!"

He had learned of the shooting of Syed-Suraj two hours after the event, through palace spies who brought the information to the back door. He had spent a whole night disbelieving it, inertia suggesting to him that it might be after all another rumor cooked up by the rajah's enemies. But with the dawn Chullunder Ghose had come—that scoundrelly babu with the know-nothing face and omniscient eyes.

The babu had had the story first hand from the female servant of a woman in the rajah's *zenana;* she had heard and seen the whole thing through a panel in the wall above a bookshelf, where she had been lurking to report the rajah's movements to her own neglected mistress.

And the worst of that was that Chullunder Ghose would write his own report to a department that regarded Smith as less than nobody but that employed the babu and accepted his information at face value because—

"Oh, dammit! I had better send my own report in—telegram in code—before the babu gets his off. Confound him, the fat brute probably wired from railhead! I had better ask for full discretion, on the ground that it may be possible to clear the individual on whom suspicion now rests. That's it."

He wrote his telegram, translated it to code, checked and rechecked it, destroyed the original, gave the coded version to his office babu to be signaled, and then returned to the veranda.

He was nearly frantic from the bandaged neck boils when a Ford car with a flat tire chattered to the front door and its abominable honking jarred Smith's nerves so that a murder seemed like sweetly reasonable justice. If a snarl and a scowl could kill he would have slain his servant.

"Show them in, you idiot! The library—yes. Where else? Do I receive visitors in the bathroom?"

He paced the veranda again a few times, trying to calm himself. But the abominable bullfrog mocked him, a mosquito bit him and he slapped his face to kill it. That jerked his head and sent a stab of pain into his neck that nearly made him cry out.

"All at sixes and sevens!" he muttered. "Eustace, old fellow, take a pull now—steady!—steady!"

He thrust both his fists into the blazer pockets and tried to stroll into the library, remembering that he had donned that ancient blazer merely to impress the damned American, who very likely would expect him to be wearing gold braid and a cocked hat.

"Ah, I'm pleased to meet you, Dr. Copeland. It is very kind of you to take this trouble," he said crisply.

"That's perfectly all right," said Copeland, setting his bag on the table.

He glanced at Chullunder Ghose, but the babu stared out of the window.

"Did you send a telegram from railhead?" Smith asked.

"No, sir," said the babu.

He had sent one from the city before seeing Smith that morning, in a code more intricate than Smith's, so he was saved from lying. But he would have lied, if necessary.

"I can see you need a sedative," said Copeland. "Let me give you that first. As a working rule, it's not a bad idea to get rid of the discomfort and then see what's left that needs attention."

He was looking into Smith's eyes. He felt his pulse without glancing at it.

"Tongue, please."

There was no apparent symptom of the solitary drinking that he half suspected.

"If you'll swallow these—" He gave him three big sugar coated pellets. "Now, if I may have a basin of warm water, we'll take that bandage off."

"Is yours what you call a bedside manner?" Smith asked.

He could not resist the impulse to be disagreeable. He hated any one who dared to take charge. The suggestion to remove the bandage should have come from himself, as the senior.

"May I ask how much your fee is for a consultation?"

Copeland stared at him, then caught the babu's eye and smiled.

"There will be no charge for the consultation. I can tell you in advance how much the rest of it will cost you when I know what needs doing."

"If I let you do it!"

"Quite so."

THEN the basin came, and the towels. Smith sat with his back to a window and Copeland carefully undid the bandage. He wetted the dressing and snatched it off so suddenly that Smith screamed.

"Dammit! That hurts!"

Copeland studied the boils.

"They'll be worse before they're better," he said. "Do you mind pain?"

"That's an idiotic question! What needs doing?"

"I should say you need to wangle me a permit to go tiger hunting."

"Impossible, my dear sir. You Americans imagine you can do as you please, whatever government you favor with your disrespect. But, I assure you, this is one place where you toe the line like other people. You may not go after tiger in Kutchdullub."

"I will do up the bandage," said Copeland. "Keep still."

"Do you mean you can do nothing for me?"

Smith turned suddenly to look at him. The involuntary movement was a torture worse than pulling off the dressing, and it lasted longer.

"Yow! It's agony, I tell you!"

"No doubt. But it isn't serious," said Copeland. "You can stick it out, I reckon. Once a surgeon names his fee it's scarcely ethical to take less. My fee is a tiger permit—just one tiger."

"I have no authority to grant one."

"Then we're two of a kind," Copeland answered. "I have no license to practise surgery in the State of Kutchdullub. I have a complimentary license for British-India, but native states aren't mentioned."

Smith smiled, forcing it; he tried hard to recover geniality and decent manners.

"Did you see the British flag?" he answered. "Within the walls of this Residency you are on British ground."

But on the way the babu had instructed Copeland.

"That may be good law," he said, "but it's a mighty thin excuse. I came here to treat boils, not to split hairs. Do I get a crack at tiger? Come along, I'll match you! You risk your certificate, and I'll risk mine."

"Unheard of!" Smith exploded.

But Chullunder Ghose came over from the other window, as meek as Moses, sat at Smith's feet, smiling upward.

"Will your Honor kindly send for secret correspondence file and study letter No. O-A-7 of August 30th?" he asked. "I saw copy of it. Same applies to this case."

"You may go to the devil," said Smith.

But his memory stirred uneasy thought. Official secret correspondence was about as rare as fresh eggs for his breakfast, so he hardly could forget that letter. But the babu quoted from it—one whole paragraph:

> "In view of all the circumstances, it is therefore urged upon all acting representatives of H. M. British-Indian Foreign Office, to avoid any but the most discreet and only absolutely necessary interference at the courts of native states. It is important that the public should not be encouraged, at this juncture, to believe that native princes are in any danger of removal from the throne or of loss of prerogatives; since obviously, if that impression should gain ground in an already heated and disturbed condition of affairs that may be likened to a major crisis, the authority of princes might be challenged by their subjects, with results that it is difficult to foresee."

Smiling at him, confidently impudent but curiously oozing a sort of wise benevolence, the babu paused. He had done with quoting. Now for some diplomacy.

"The devil," he said, "quotes Scripture, sahib. But your Honor's humble servant, this babu, is devilishly *compos mentis* when it comes to stern realities. I think your Honor would appreciate an O.M, or perhaps a C.S.I, before retirement? Same is not impossible."

"Curse your damned impertinence!" Smith answered. "Do you mean you sell 'em?"

"Sahib, no. I wangle 'em. A decoration is a public honor worn by diplomats who know enough to trust a totally dishonorable person in a tight place. This is tight place, very. *Verb. sap.* Self am a dishonorable person; nobody could easily imagine me bedecorated with a star and ribbon. Reprimands are my meat; I enjoy same. I was reprimanded—and received a pay raise incidentally—for getting the goods on the Afghan minister; but it was General Aloysius McCann who got the decoration. General McCann had hives; they made him as indignant as a hornet in a big drum. He has threatened me with mayhem. But we saved an international imbroglio, and he got decorated for it. Now, you. Why not be a properly bejeweled personage at your retirement? And is the neck not painful?"

TO BE CONTINUED

The CAMP-FIRE

A free-to-all meeting place for readers, writers and adventurers

IN VIEW of our recent discussion about our native "big cats", the following correspondence on a black and alien member of the tribe will be interesting:

Whitefish, Ontario

After seeing the glow of your fire for many years I have finally decided to make a formal call. In your December 1st issue Robert Simpson mentions repeatedly the existence of a *black puma.*

I have before me as I write the skins of several pumas, also known as mountain lions, cougars, painters, etc. I have never before heard of melanism in this branch of the cat family, and as the story takes place in Africa I wonder if Mr. Simpson really meant a black panther or leopard, so common in Siam.

The puma is not as a rule as vindictive as the one in his otherwise excellent tale, but the panther or leopard, which is the same animal, is all that he claims for this puma.

I am not writing this just to find fault, but to get a ruling on the subject, as there are many of us sitting silently around the fire that will question Mr. Simpson if he persists in having a black puma in Africa. —H. G. HUTCHINSON

Here is Mr. Simpson's reply:

New York, New York

Obviously Mr. Hutchinson knows more about pumas than I do, because, to be quite frank, I know nothing about 'em at all. But I've discovered, since I received the letter, that while the puma has quite freely been miscalled a panther, the panther (or black leopard) has never been called a puma! Also, it would appear that the puma is strictly a product of the Americas and is altogether out of place in an African setting. So that my puma, in "So-So Krooboy Palaver", was undoubtedly a black panther in spite of the following little episode, which is not told in an effort to slide from under my responsibility for my error, but simply to indicate what a simple, trusting soul I really am:

While I was spending my time on a West African trading station I had occasion, for the good of my health, to take a trip on a freighter through the tangle of the Niger Delta creeks. The freighter was a grubby, iron-decked craft out of Hamburg, and was decidedly in the gin-tank class, with mighty little accommodation for passengers. But in the skipper's library was a copy of "Martin Chuzzlewit" and on the lower deck aft was a shady spot and a pile of tarpaulin. So I squatted

on the tarpaulin with "Martin Chuzzlewit" and tried to forget my temperature and my stomach and the bilious looking mangroves and the smells.

I MIGHT have succeeded in this if the "puma" had been more amenable. He saw me first, and the decidedly unfriendly protest he gave voice to made me forget my temperature etc. much more successfully than Dickens was doing. I spent several nasty seconds wondering what had made that unhappy blood-chilling sound and when I discovered the beast in a long, low-built cage just a few feet away from where I was sitting, you can be quite sure I took a good look at the padlock that prevented him from translating that snarl into action.

He was black and glossy, with the faintest hint of brown in him, rather less than half grown, I imagine, and he did not like me at all. He did not seem to mind the Krooboys who scuffed back and forth and the German deck-hands, who were a tough looking lot, did not bother him either. But I apparently annoyed him exceedingly, and as his objections to my presence made "Martin Chuzzlewit" rather dull, I went in search of the skipper and asked him when he had picked up the menagerie and what he was going to do with it. And he said: "That's a puma I'm taking to Hagenback's. I'll get a good price for it. It's just the right size for those fellows."

IT NEVER occurred to me to question the statement that the animal was a puma, any more than it occurred to me to question that it was "just the right size for those fellows." As I've already suggested, I'm a trusting soul and when a dyed-in-the-wool Oil Rivers skipper, such as that skipper was, made an apparently authoritative statement on a matter of the sort, I was perfectly willing to accept the statement as final. In truth, because zoology is certainly not my forte, the name of the animal did not interest me very much; and, in my story, if only for dramatic effect, I'd much rather have called it a black panther than a puma. "Black panther" is a much more fearsome mouthful than the softer sounding "puma."

Incidentally, the skipper explained to me that the beast's disapproval of me was not at all personal. He said: "It's your white pants he doesn't like. If there were a clean towel on this ruddy ship I could make him mad as hell."

The setting and the props for "So-So Krooboy Palaver" were, therefore, real enough—particularly since we landed on a mud-bank late that afternoon—but the next time the voice of authority tells me that a lion I'm looking at is a lion, I'll consult the encylopedia.

—ROBERT SIMPSON

AND speaking of cats, here's a formula for the valerian lure one of you inquired about:

United States Department of Agriculture,
Bureau of Biological Survey,
Phoenix, Arizona

I read the inquiry of Mr. A. E. Kummerling of Verona, Pennsylvania, in the January 1st issue of *Adventure* in regard to the use of valerian in the taking of cats, wild or otherwise. I am connected with the above department as a hunter, but my reply is unofficial. The form of valerian you wish is zinc valerate. A base may be made for this valerate from fish, rotted, and glycerine, ½ teaspoonful valerate to 1 qt. base. This is a trap scent; also good for foxes.

—H. R. ALLEN

A BRIEF note from J. Allan Dunn, of our Writers' Brigade, on gold in Guiana:

New York, New York

Anent the Ask Adventure inquiry of Mr. Mapes about gold in Guiana (January 1st issue): Without in the least decrying the excellent warnings of Dr. Shaw, I thought some might like to know that a rich alluvial deposit has recently been discovered on the border of Guiana and Venezuela. This information is authentic and comes through the last publication of the American Geographical Society, of which I am a Fellow. More information could be got through the *Geological Outlook* via Dr. L. C. Graton, American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers. Future gold production is a source of worry at present. For one thing, even if the Allies were willing to pay all their war debts to the U.S.A, it is a fact that there is not enough gold—mined and minted, or ingoted—to pay with.

—J. ALLAN DUNN

A NOTE endorsing two-eyed shooting:

Visalia, California

In your always interesting department for Feb. 1st, 1933, Mr. T. L. Gillespie points out the advantage of shooting a rifle with both eyes open. This method is an advantage with rifle, pistol or scattergun, provided one has normal eyesight and uses ordinary sights. With the now almost obsolete fine peep-sight once so popular with target shooters it was necessary to close the "off" eye because of the scant illumination through the minute hole in the peep. With open or notch sights or with Lyman or Marble peeps, two eyes open are better than one, far quicker and just as accurate.

I learned from one of the best trick- and target-shots a great many years ago that a sight big enough to get in your way was far better than one you had to strain your eye to find, particularly as one advanced in age and the eye refused to accommodate itself to the three distances of front and rear sights and target, be this last either game or paper.

ASHLEY A. HAINES for years used a device that I quickly adopted but have never seen used elsewhere. The human eye is exactly like

a camera lens in that if "stopped down" it has almost universal focus, so Mr. Haines used to drill a very small hole in a piece of thin metal, push the strip of metal up under his hat, center the hole in the metal before his eye and clear things up, eliminating the "hair on the sights" so familiar to shooters over a certain age. It is quite remarkable how this simple device will assist one's shooting.

I had best say that Haines' "third eye" does not spell speed in getting on the target and requires a well illuminated mark, but it is very helpful in the bright and sometimes glaring light of the far West and Southwest.

ALONG the line of open-eye shooting is a stunt once often used when shooting galleries were maintained almost everywhere. One would cut an opening in the center of a visiting or business card to closely fit the muzzle of the rifle, then push the card on the barrel with greatest dimension of the card up and down and the blank side toward the eye. This of course cut the target from the view of a one-eyed shooter. The next step was to challenge some one to shoot against you, you using this blinded gun.

The secret was that when shooting with both eyes open you saw target and sights—if your eyes were normal or nearly so—just as if the card was not in place on the muzzle of the gun, and could shoot just as well.

Personally, shooting with both eyes open, I never had Mr. Gillespie's experience of seeing two barrels on a single gun unless I had dallied with some of the nerve tonics once, in the past, quite popular; but I'll not deny that I have seen double.

—MORVE L. WEAVER

BOXER versus wrestler: the Gotch-Weeks fight as seen from ringside by an authority:

Los Angeles, California

Dan Brennan of New York City takes the boxer angle as against the wrestler in a setto in the Jan. 15th *Adventure*, in answer to L. O. Barton of Clifton, Tex., who started something in his letter published in your magazine of Nov. 15th. Check and double check. Brennan mentions the Frank Gotch barnstorming trip into Alaska, on which Frank Slavin knocked Gotch out. Right.

I was sporting editor of the Seattle *Star* along in 1905 when Gotch made that trip. He was fed up with wrestling and thought he could clean up some easy money by breaking into the ring. He didn't get far. I saw him fight Boomer Weeks, the Spokane fireman, when Gotch stopped off there on his way back to Iowa from Alaska. It was a 12-round go, and Weeks made a monkey of Gotch in the ring that night in Spokane. Incidentally, during his stay there that trip Gotch wrestled old Dunc MacMillan for the world championship in the mixed style: Greco-Roman, Cornish and catch-as-catch-can. He beat the Old Fox that night.

GOTCH was as hard as nails and tough as rawhide. He was a tough lad, and would give any of these modern babes plenty opposition. He was round, solid and as fast on his feet as Dempsey—but he couldn't hit. Weeks was a little better than six feet and weighed around one ninety stripped. He was much as a boxer, but couldn't hit. He had a long mean left like Tunney, did most of his fighting with it and kept his right cocked but seldom shot it. He had everything a boxer needs but the midrif equipment, and the ferocity.

Gotch bounced out of his corner like a rubber ball at the first bell and made a wild swing at Weeks. It would have been curtains for the fireman if it had connected; but it was short. Thereafter the fight was sort of funny. Weeks stuck out that long left and kept peppering the wrestler with it. Occasionally he would shoot the right, but Gotch had a keen eye and rolled with or ducked the punches. But he just couldn't dodge that flicking left. Gotch, maddened, tried to get past it. In the later rounds Gotch would be set to hit and Weeks simply jammed that long left into the wrestler's face. The result was that Gotch would swing and make a clean miss, lacking the reach.

GOTCH was so musclebound that his blows were looping; his straight punch was short, and even the uppercut was tight. He could take what Weeks had, but the big fireman came out of the 12 rounds without a mark. Weeks had the long arms and wide shoulders of a Fitzsimmons, but he hadn't the knack of punch. Corbett, Johnson, Dempsey or even Tunney (maybe) would have murdered Gotch—and yet he was a tough egg. Evenly matched in their respective stuff, a *fighting* boxer can put it over the wrestler in a ring. One trouble these days would be to find a boxer that can and will fight. In a rough-and-tumble with nothing barred, I'd back the wrestler, unless it were a man like Dempsey.

I saw Rooney the cop punch the ambition out of the Terrible Turk in a straight wrestling match one night at Dayton, O., about 30 years ago. Let a wrestler get hold of the boxer and it's curtains, unless the boxer has a short punch such as Jack Johnson or Dempsey used. The professional wrestler has to be musclebound; the boxer has to have long fluid muscles. No man could absorb a full Johnson or Dempsey punch and retain his constriction power. As Brennan says, a hard-necked wrestler transmits the shock of a punch on the head and is easier to knock out.

—REED ROBINSON

PLEASE address all communications intended for this section to "The Camp-fire", care of the magazine.

ASK Adventure

For Free Information and Services You Can't Get Elsewhere

South America

A TIP for monkey-catchers: Grab them in the early morning when they're drowsy.

Request:—"1. Are the monkeys up the Orinoco very hard to catch?

2. How is their capture best effected?"

—GOULD HENRIKSEN, San Francisco, California

Reply, by Mr. Edgar Young:—1. No, quite easy. You want to get them in the early morning when they are drowsy. Wear heavy gloves, for they bite viciously when taken hold of.

2. They are caught by hand and also taken by cage traps and nets. A small bounty offered to natives will usually bring in a number of them more easily than you can capture them yourself.

Submarine

TORPEDOES, their speed and range.

Request:—"Could you please tell me what range a torpedo shot from a submarine has and how fast it moves?"—VINCENT MCGRATH, Chicago, Illinois

Reply, by Lieut. F. V. Greene:—The maximum range of a torpedo is 10,000 yards at 28 knots. They make 30 or 40 knots at shorter ranges.

Camp-site

WHERE to pitch your tent.

Request:—"What are some of the simple rules for picking a camp-site?"

—RICHARD FITZGERALD, Rochester, New York

Reply, by Mr. Paul M. Fink:—When you pitch your tent, see that it is where any surface water would not run under it in case of sudden rain; or dig a ditch to carry off such water. If under a tree, make sure that there are no dead branches above you, or that the tree itself is sturdy enough to stand any windstorm that might blow up. Pick a spot where you can have the benefit of the early morning sun, but be sheltered during the heat of the day.

Cougar

NEVER known to kill a man.

Request:—"Maybe you know about cougars. A canyon a few miles north of Okanogan, Washington, in which a couple of dozen miners were massacred by Indians not so many decades ago, is supposed to be simply swarming with cougars. And while I never saw any, I must admit that it may be because I had neither the opportunity nor the slightest inclination to remain there long enough to see anything. I shall appreciate your help if you can tell me how big a cougar is compared with, for instance, a coyote or some well known breed of dog. Also, would a cougar attack a man? Do they jump down from trees? Are they spotted or plain tan?"

—DOROTHY M. JOHNSON, Menasha, Wisconsin

Reply, by Mr. Frank Winch:—Within the last forty hours I have returned from a pack train trip, which took me to the fringe of the Okanogan country. I was snowed in for a spell—and shot two cougars. These, added to my previous score, bring the total to about fifty in my lifetime. Aside from this I usually hunt with a guide who is considered the best man for cougar in the Pacific Northwest. This detail I mention, so that you may well rely on the information requested.

It is *not* within my experience that a cougar has ever attacked a white man, let alone killed him. I have seen them at their best and worst, have been near them when wounded—that is, the cougar—have seen them tear up the dogs, but *never* make any attack on a man. Possibly you may be interested in this one phase. The last cougar we

got measured eight feet and four inches. He was treed by the dogs; my guide handled the pistol—we never use guns for cougar hunting. I was handling the motion picture camera. The cougar made a jump into a deadfall of timber, with three of the dogs after him. One dog grabbed the cougar by the mouth, and the cougar got the dog's face in his mouth. Neither the guide nor myself dared shoot for fear of killing the dog, and by this time it was a free-for-all, with all three dogs in the tangle of logs. One of our dogs had to give up the fight, very badly hurt; and seeing that another of the dogs was about to be killed, the guide climbed down into the mess of timber and fighting animals, put his pistol within a foot of the cougar's head and shot him with a .22 caliber.

A fair sized cougar will weigh about ninety-five pounds; they are tan, have no spots; they will jump from trees; they average to kill one deer a week or, if they can get it, a colt, or calf. They have a great fear of man, and in all my time, sleeping out where cougars are really thick, I have never even thought of being attacked by a cougar when only covered with blankets, with a saddle for my pillow. Once in the Dismal Swamp of Florida a panther killed my Indian guide, but that was only after the panther had been wounded. Another back-tracked me for about a mile. Possibly the mate of the dead panther. But Northern cougars—never! That is, to the best of my knowledge, and I have made many inquiries of old-timers for the reason that this cougar business has been a moot question for many years.

Photography

COPYING snapshots without negatives.

Request:—"I have a number of snapshots which I would like to make copies of. I have no negatives of same.

How would I go about doing this myself? I have no knowledge of photography."

—AL. KELLY, New London, Connecticut

Reply, by Mr. Paul L. Anderson:—Copying prints is not a very difficult operation, but it requires special apparatus and a fair amount of technical skill; you could not do it satisfactorily at first; and it would require considerable study and expense to learn the work. I should say, roughly, that you could have a hundred or more snapshots copied and printed for what it would cost to buy the necessary apparatus, to say nothing of what you would spend for materials while learning.

Kanakas

ALTHOUGH they don't know it, they are of the white race.

Request:—"In the Camp-fire of August first Mr. Stanley Vestal says, 'I have understood that Kanakas from the Sandwich Islands are classified by anthropologists as belonging to the white race.'

I have been working among these people for nearly a year, but they do not seem to classify themselves as white.

While not questioning Mr. Vestal's understanding of the matter, I would like to know whether he is right or not."

—DONALD L. PATCH, Hilo, Hawaii

Reply, by Dr. Neville Whymant:—You raise an old and very vexed question. To be sure, a large number of authorities support the theory that the Kanakas are Caucasians and, therefore, "whites" in the anthropological sense of that word. Edward Tregear, a first class scholar in South Seas languages and ethnology, wrote a book entirely devoted to this topic, "The Aryan Maori"—and here Maori is not taken in its strictly literal sense, but applies equally to the Kanakas of Hawaii, Samoa, the Marquesas, the Tonga Islands, and all the others. On the other hand, there are many sound scholars who are of the opinion that this contention is not proved and they propound theories of South Asiatic origin and several others. The native traditions do not help very much on this point, and certainly the islanders I have met do not assume that they are "white", Caucasian, or anything of that sort.

The whole question still remains open, scientifically, until some further evidence is forthcoming. But it is difficult to see whence this new evidence will come. The peoples are rapidly dying out, and so little has been done in the matter of collecting data from those remaining that only in the rare event of something appearing from a totally unexpected quarter will there be any chance of the problem being settled definitely. Meanwhile the balance of opinion rests on the "white" hypothesis.

Taxidermy

THE problem of making a snake look life-like.

Request:—"How should one go about mounting a rattlesnake so it will look life-like? How should it be skinned so the head will be intact?"

—J. B. TAYLOR, San Diego, California

Reply, by Mr. Seth W. Bullock:—When you speak of mounting a snake so that it will appear life-like, you are getting into deep water. There is nothing more difficult in the whole realm of taxidermy than the life-like presentation of a mounted snake. The reason lies not in the difficulty of the work itself, which is comparatively easy as far as snakes are concerned, but in the fact that the natural beauty and coloring of the scales fade appreciably when the reptile has been dead for some time. To overcome this, it takes a master hand with brush and paint, and involves a technique the average taxidermist can not supply to the work.

John Rowley, in his "Taxidermy & Museum Exhibition", gives very detailed instructions in this work, a copy of which can be secured from the publishers, D. Appleton & Company, New York City; or, no doubt, your public library can secure you one in case you do not care to purchase.

Outside of museums the mounted snake is a rare object, and for this very reason—the inability to reproduce the coloring and scale tones so evident when the reptile was alive.

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelop and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to this magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The expert will in all cases answer to the best of his ability, but neither he nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing or for employment. Ask Adventure covers outdoor opportunities, but only in the way of general advice.

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing *Fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting; bait; camping outfits; fishing trips.*—JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

Small Boating *Skiff, outboard, small launch river and lake cruising.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, California.

Canoeing *Paddling, sailing, cruising; regattas.*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 536 S. Clark St., Chicago, Illinois.

Motor Boating GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motor Camping MAJOR CHAS. G. PERCIVAL, M. D., care American Tourist Camp Assn., 152 West 65th St., New York City.

Yachting A. R. KNAUER, 2722 E. 75th Place, Chicago, Ill.

Motor Vehicles *Operation, legislative restrictions and traffic.*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care *Adventure.*

Automotive and Aircraft Engines *Design, operation and maintenance.*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care *Adventure.*

All Shotguns, *including foreign and American makes; wing shooting.*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care *Adventure.*

All Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers, *foreign and American.*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. 3, Box 69, Salem, Ore.

Edged Weapons, *pole arms and armor.*—CAPT. ROBERT E. GARDNER, 17 E. Seventh Ave., Columbus, Ohio.

First Aid CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Box 322, Westfield, New Jersey.

Hiking and Health-Building Outdoors CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Box 322, Westfield, New Jersey.

Camping and Woodcraft PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tennessee.

Mining and Prospecting *Territory anywhere in North America. Mining law, prospecting, outfitting; any mineral, metallic or nonmetallic.*—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

Precious and Semi-precious Stones *Cutting and polishing of gem materials; technical information.*—F. J. ESTERLIN, 210 Post St., San Francisco, Cal.

Forestry in the United States *Big-Game hunting, guides and equipment; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States.*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry *Tropical forests and products. No questions on employment.*—WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, care of Insular Forester, Rio Piedras, Porto Rico.

Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada R. T. NEWMAN, P. O. Drawer 368, Anaconda, Mont.

Army Matters, United States and Foreign CAPTAIN GLEN R. TOWNSEND, Ripon, Wisconsin.

Navy Matters *Regulations, history, customs, drill, gunnery. Maritime law.*—LIEUT. FRANCIS V. GREENE, U. S. N. R. (Retired), 442 Forty-ninth St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

U. S. Marine Corps CAPT. F. W. HOPKINS, 128 S. Edinburgh Ave., Los Angeles, Cal.

Aviation *Airplanes; airships; airways and landing fields; contests; Aero Clubs; insurance; laws; licenses; operating data schools; foreign activities; publications. Parachutes and gliders. No questions on stock promotion.*—LIEUTENANT JEFFREY R. STARKS, 1408 "N" Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

State Police FRANCIS H. BENT, Box 176, Farmingdale, N. J.

Federal Investigative Activities *Secret Service, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, Box 176, Farmingdale, N. J.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police PATRICK LEE, 189-16 Thirty-seventh Avenue, Flushing, New York.

Horses *Care, breeding, training of horses in general; hunting, jumping, and polo; horses of the old and new West.*—THOMAS H. DAMERON, 1709 Berkley Ave., Pueblo, Colo.

Dogs JOHN B. THOMPSON, care *Adventure.*

American Anthropology North of the Panama Canal *Customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions.*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Cal.

Taxidermy SETH BULLOCK, care *Adventure.*

Entomology *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects, etc.*—DR. S. W. FROST, Arendtsville, Pa.

Herpetology *General information on reptiles and amphibians; their habits and distribution.*—KARL P. SCHMIDT, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois.

Ornithology *Birds; their habits and distribution.*—DAVIS QUINN, 3548 Tryon Ave., Bronx, New York, N. Y.

Stamps H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Ave., Denver, Colo.

Coins and Medals HOWLAND WOOD, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., New York City.

Radio *Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.*—DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J.

Photography *Information on outfitting and on work in out-of-the-way places. General information.*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, New Jersey.

Football JOHN B. FOSTER, American Sports Pub. Co., 45 Rose Street, New York City.

Baseball FREDERICK LIEB, *The New York Evening Post,* 75 West St., New York City.

Track JACKSON SCHOLZ, P. O. Box 163, Jenkintown, Pa.

Swimming LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 260 Washington St., N. Y. C.

✠**Skiing and Snowshoeing** W. H. PRICE, 3436 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.

Archery EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Wrestling CHARLES B. CRANFORD, 35 E. 22nd St., New York City.

Boxing CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH.

Fencing CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 455 West 23rd St., New York City.

The Sea Part 1 *American Waters.* Also ships, seamen, wages, duties, statistics and records of American shipping. Vessels lost, abandoned, sold to aliens and all government owned vessels.—LIEUT. HARRY E. RIESEBERG, 47 Dick St., Rosemont, Alexandria, Va.

★**The Sea Part 2** *British Waters.* Also old-time sailoring.—CAPTAIN DINGLE, care *Adventure.*

★**The Sea Part 3** *Atlantic and Indian Oceans: Cape Horn and Magellan Straits; Islands and Coasts.* (See also West Indian Sections.) *The Mediterranean; Islands and Coasts.*—CAPTAIN DINGLE, care *Adventure.*

Philippine Islands BUCK CONNER, Quartzsite, Arizona, care of Conner Field.

★**New Guinea** L. P. B. ARMIT, Port Moresby, Territory of Papua, via Sydney, Australia.

★**New Zealand, Cook Islands, Samoa** TOM L. MILLS *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand.

★**Australia and Tasmania** ALAN FOLEY, 18a Sandridge Street, Bondi, Sydney, Australia.

★**South Sea Islands** WILLIAM MCCREADIE, "Cardross," Suva, Fiji.

Asia Part 1 *Siam, Andamans, Malay Straits, Straits Settlements, Shan States and Yunnan.*—GORDON MACCREAGH, Box 197, Centerport, Long Island, N. Y.

Asia Part 2 *Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies in general, India, Kashmir, Nepal. No questions on employment.*—CAPT. R. W. VAN RAVEN DE STURLER, care *Adventure*.

Asia Part 3 *Anam, Laos, Cambodia, Tongking, Cochin-China.*—DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, care *Adventure*.

★**Asia Part 4** *Southern and Eastern China.*—DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, care *Adventure*.

★**Asia Part 6** *Northern China and Mongolia.*—GEORGE W. TWOMEY, M. D., U. S. Veterans' Hospital, Fort Snelling, Minn.

Asia Part 7 *Japan.*—OSCAR E. RILEY, 4 Huntington Ave., Scarsdale, New York.

Asia Part 8 *Persia, Arabia.*—CAPTAIN BEVERLEY-GIDDINGS, care *Adventure*.

★**Africa Part 1** *Egypt, Tunis, Algeria.*—DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, care *Adventure*.

Africa Part 2 *Abyssinia, French Somaliland, Belgian Congo. No questions on employment.*—CAPT. R. W. VAN RAVEN DE STURLER, care of *Adventure*.

Africa Part 3 (British) *Sudan, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya. No questions on employment.*—CAPT. R. W. VAN RAVEN DE STURLER, care of *Adventure*.

Africa Part 4 *Tripoli. Including the Sahara, Tuaregs, caravan trade and caravan routes.*—CAPTAIN BEVERLEY-GIDDINGS, care *Adventure*.

Africa Part 5 *Morocco.*—GEORGE E. HOLT, care *Adventure*.

Africa Part 6 *Sierra Leone to Old Calabar; West Africa; Southern and Northern Nigeria.*—N. E. NELSON, Firestone Plantations Company, Akron, Ohio.

Africa Part 7 *Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal and Rhodesia.*—CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, Adventure Camp, Box 107, Santa Susana, Cal.

✠**Africa Part 8** *Portuguese East.*—R. G. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada.

Madagascar RALPH LINTON, 324 Sterling Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.

Europe G. I. COLBRON, East Ave., New Canaan, Conn.

South America Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile.*—EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*.

South America Part 2 *Venezuela, the Guianas, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.*—DR. PAUL VANORDEN SHAW, 457 W. 123rd St., New York, N. Y.

✠**West Indies** *Cuba, Isle of Pines, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Virgin and Jamaica Groups.*—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

Central America *Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala.*—E. BRUGUIERE, 438 W. 20th St., New York City.

Mexico Part 1 *Northern Border States of Old Mexico, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamanulipas.*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Mexico Part 2 *Southeastern Federal Territory of Quintana Roo and States of Yucatan and Campeche.* Also archeology.—W. RUSSELL SHEETS, 301 Poplar Ave., Takoma Park, Md.

✠**Mexico Part 3** *Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan.*—JOHN NEWMAN PAGE, Sureno Carranza 16, Cuautla, Morelos, Mexico.

Newfoundland.—C. T. JAMES, Box 1331, St. Johns, Newfoundland.

Greenland Also dog-team work, whaling, geology, ethnology (Eskime).—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

Canada Part 1 *New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.* Also fur farming.—FRED L. BOWDEN, 104 Fairview Ave., Binghamton, New York.

✠**Canada Part 2** *Southeastern Quebec.*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 24 Plessis, St., Quebec, Canada.

✠**Canada Part 3** *Height of Land Region, Northern Ontario and Northern Quebec, Southeastern Ungova and Keewatin.* Big game, fishing, canoeing, Northland travel, also H. B. Company Posts. Indian tribes.—S. E. SANGSTER, 27 Plymouth Ave., Ottawa, Ont., Canada.

✠**Canada Part 4** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario.*—HARRY M. MOORE, *The Chronicle*, Arnprior, Ont., Canada.

✠**Canada Part 5** *Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario.* Also national parks.—A. D. L. ROBINSON, 269 Victoria Road, Walkerville, Ont., Canada.

Canada Part 6 *Humers Island and English River District.*—T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn.

✠**Canada Part 7** *Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta.*—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C.

Canada Part 8 *The Northw. Ter. and the Arctic, especially Ellesmere Land, Baffinland, Melville and North Devon Islands, North Greenland and the half-explored islands west of Ellesmere.*—PATRICK LEE, 189-16 Thirty-seventh Avenue, Flushing, New York.

✠**Canada Part 9** *Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Northern Keewatin and Hudson Bay mineral belt.*—LIONEL H. G. MOORE, Flin Flon, Manitoba, Canada.

Alaska Also mountain climbing. THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 1015 W. 56th St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Western U. S. Part 1 *California, Utah and Arizona.*—E. E. HARRIMAN, 854½ East 47th St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Western U. S. Part 2 *New Mexico.* Also Indians. Indian dances, including the snake dance.—H. F. ROBINSON, 1211 West Roma Ave., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Western U. S. Part 3 *Colorado and Wyoming.* Homesteading. Sheep and Cattle Raising.—WILLIAM WELLS, Sisters, Oregon.

Western U. S. Part 4 *Nevada, Montana and the Northern Rocky Mountains.*—FRED W. EGELSTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nevada.

Western U. S. Part 5 *Idaho and Surrounding Country.*—R. T. NEWMAN, P. O. Drawer 368, Anaconda, Mont.

Western U. S. Part 6 *Tex. and Okla.*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Western U. S. Part 7 *Oregon and Washington.*—FRANK WINCH, 405 N. Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, Cal.

Middle Western U. S. Part 1 *The Dakotas, Neb., Ia., Kan.*—JOSEPH MILLS HANSON, care *Adventure*.

Middle Western U. S. Part 2 *Missouri and Arkansas. Also the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Especially wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps.*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care *Adventure*.

Middle Western U. S. Part 3 *Ind., Ill., Mich., Miss., and Lake Michigan.* Also claiming, natural history legends.—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care *Adventure*.

Middle Western U. S. Part 4 *Mississippi River.* Routes, connections, itineraries; river-steamer and power boat travel; idiosyncrasies of the river and its tributaries.—GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Grafton P. O., Ingram, Pa.

Middle Western U. S. Part 5 *Lower Mississippi River (St. Louis down), Atchalaya across La. swamps. St. Francis River, Arkansas Bottom.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, California.

Middle Western U. S. Part 6 *Great Lakes.* Also courses, distances, reefs and shoal lights, landmarks, charts, laws, penalties, river navigation.—H. C. GARDNER, 1863 E. 57th St., Cleveland, Ohio.

Eastern U. S. Part 1 *Eastern Maine. All territory east of Penobscot River.*—H. B. STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me.

Eastern U. S. Part 2 *Western Maine. For all territory west of the Penobscot River.*—DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 70 Main Street, Bangor, Me.

Eastern U. S. Part 3 *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I. and Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P. O. Box 1332, New Haven, Conn.

Eastern U. S. Part 4 *Adirondacks, New York.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, California.

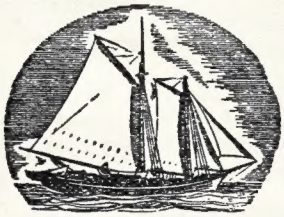
Eastern U. S. Part 5 *Maryland, District of Columbia, West Virginia.* Also historical places.—LAURENCE EDMUND ALLEN, 206 Aracoma Apts., Charleston, West Virginia.

Eastern U. S. Part 6 *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. and S. C., Fla. and Ga. Except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard.* Also sawmilling.—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care *Adventure*.

Eastern U. S. Part 7 *The Great Smokies and the Appalachian Mountains South of Virginia.*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

★(*Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon for five cents.*)
✠(*Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon for three cents.*)

THE TRAIL AHEAD—THE NEXT ISSUE OF *ADVENTURE,* APRIL 1st



Superlative Red-Blooded Stories by -

BILL ADAMS

Of the men who go down to the sea in ships. A deeply moving narrative by an acknowledged master writer of the deepwater sailors.

W. C. TUTTLE

The Old West in the days when a man made the law with his Colt. No man evokes the spirit of those times so dramatically as Tuttle.

L. PATRICK GREENE

The jungle and the British South African police. A favorite author returns with a stirring tale of the Dark Continent.

F. R. BUCKLEY

A red-headed Irishman becomes admiral of a South American navy. Not since "The Way of Sinners" has Buckley given us a story so rich in humor and excitement.

RAYMOND S. SPEARS

The Mississippi seemed to carry all the most dangerous of the human débris to that little gunstore. Raymond S. Spears at his best.

TALBOT MUNDY

Continuing a serial of the Indian Secret Service. In this story new readers will find every reason for the tremendous popularity of the creator of "Jimgrim."

CHARLES L. CLIFFORD

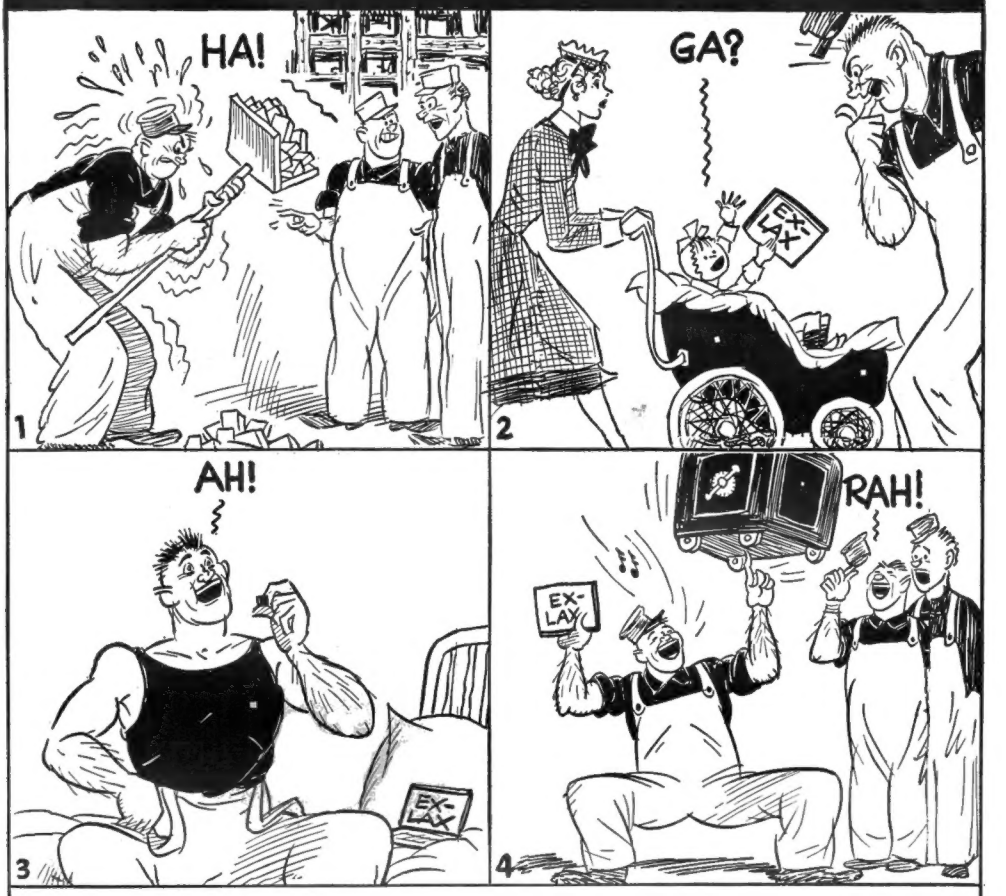
Mexican banditry and the U. S. Cavalry on the Border. Written for you by a man who spent years there as an officer.

EDMUND S. WHITMAN

Adventure presents Mr. Whitman, comparatively new to our pages, as a "white hope" for the humorous story. His banana republic yarns are bound to be laughed at.

"REGULAR" FOLKS

BY JEFFERSON MACHAMER



TENDER little children and strong men! Ex-Lax is the ideal laxative for both. Everybody insists on safety. And mildness and effectiveness, too, are essential for young and old.

Ex-Lax tastes just like delicious chocolate. Take an Ex-Lax or two tonight and feel fine tomorrow! When Nature forgets—remember Ex-Lax!

Get Ex-Lax today, at your drug store—in 10c, 25c and 50c sizes. Or write for free sample to Ex-Lax, Inc., Dept. Y33, Box 170, Times Plaza Station, Brooklyn, N. Y.

KEEP "REGULAR" WITH

EX-LAX

THE CHOCOLATED LAXATIVE

Aw Kitty, you know I like licorice!

Black Jack

CHEWING GUM

For the love o' licorice

FREE! Black Jack Jig-Saw Puzzle Picture. Send two wrappers *(outer 5¢ wrappers only)* from two packages of Black Jack Gum, together with 3¢ in stamps. American Chicle Co., Dept. A.F., Long Island City, N. Y

Print clearly:

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____

Offer expires April 30, 1933.